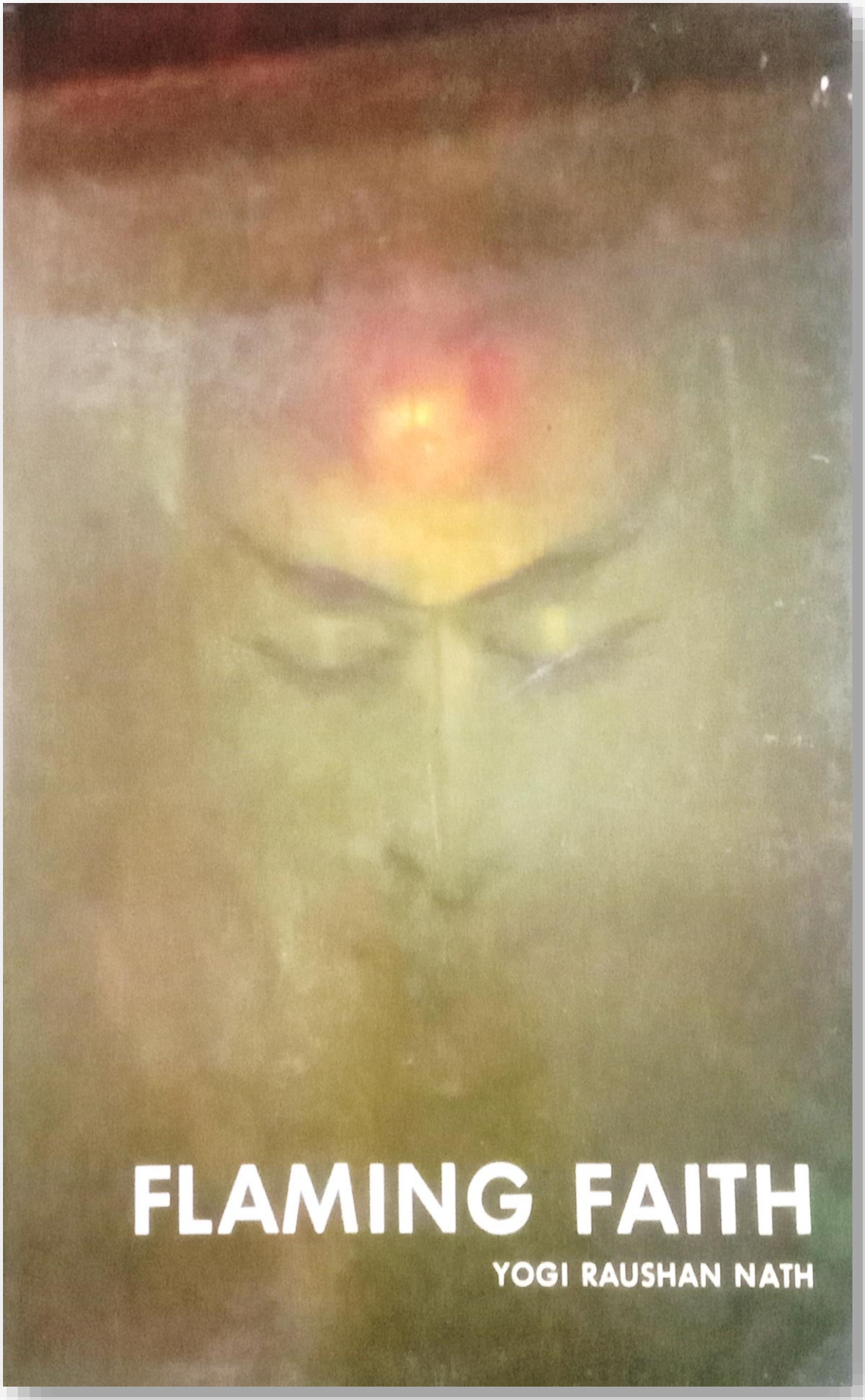
FLAMING FAITH
YOGI RAUSHAN NATH

FLAMAING FAITH

No two situations are ever intrinsically alike. It is safe and sane to follow the spirit and not the example in toto. To follow in the footsteps of Mahatma Gandhi does not mean to do what he did-opposing the government and offering Satyagraha. In the changed circumstances it should mean: "Value freedom and fight for it."

FLAMAING FAITH

SONG OF LIFE, LOVE AND THE LORD

YOGI RAUSHAN NATH

Foreword by

Shri T.N. Chaturvedi

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Other books by the author:

FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT 1961, 1978, 1986.

NEW DIMENSIONS OF YOGA 1964

THE UNSEEN HAND 1971

HINDUISM AND ITS DYNAMISM 1977, 1983, 1985, 1987.

THE HINDU BELIEVES 1980, 1982, 1983, 1985, 1987.

HINDU KI ASTHA (HINDI) 1989.

DISTRIBUTORS:

Jay Cee Publications,

Publishers & Distributors,

AIMO House,

1E/11 Jhandewalan Extension,

New Delhi-110055 (India).

Printed in India at

RAKESH PRESS,

A-7, Naraina Industrial Area, Phase II, New Delhi-110028.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I appreciate the help that friends gave. Shri Ram Nathji (of Rakesh Press) saw the book through the press. Trilokji and Rajindraji took care of the manuscript till it was ready for printing. Dr. Richard Harring of the Western Michigan University, U.S.A., gave helpful suggestions. The cover and other paintings are by Shri Ram Kumarji of Bombay.

The foreword is by Shri T.N. Chaturvedi, Auditor & Comptroller General of India-a kindly favour indeed.

All make me aware of the providential grace.

"…….

and let today embrace the

past with remembrance and the

future with longing."

Kahlil Gibran

Dedicated

To

The living memory

Of

Dr. Bhagat Ram Puri

T.N. CHATURVEDI

COMPTROLLER & AUDITOR GENERAL

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FOREWORD

Yogi Raushan Nath has written extensively on spiritual themes. He has a large circle of friends, admirers and even disciples in this country and abroad. It was almost fifteen years ago that I was introduced to him. The introduction initially was through a book which was presented to me by a colleague who had intimately known him. The book made me think about some of the questions which seem to perpetually arise in human mind. It generated vague kind of doubts and misgivings. Later on I chanced to meet Nathji. Since then he has been uniformly kind to me. He will occasionally drop in and we shall discuss invariably a number of things including aspects of personal quest for fulfilment, intricacies of human relationships, purpose of life, etc. He has a benign smile and will expound his views with remarkable simplicity but at the same time with a good deal of fervour. This will always leave an impression that his words do not flow from intellectual conviction but from some sort of personal realization.

Though normally quite articulate Yogi Raushan Nathji will not easily be forthcoming about the details of his personal life which obviously has been chequered one, and which found a sense of purpose and direction after he met his revered Guru. The transforming influence of his Guru, he acknowledges, is an enduring feature. In a rare moment of self-revelation I learnt that once while somebody introduced him to Pandit Nehru in 1945 at Pahalgaon (J&K) as a spiritualist, Pandit Nehru is reported to have said that in India we have yogis and not spiritualists. The happy and apt nomenclature has since then stuck to him. He is the exponent of the philosophy and discipline of Yoga which find exposition

in his writings. He wants man to be attuned to higher values in his yearning for happiness.

Yogi Raushan Nath has an arresting personality with tremendous self-possession. He is without the flamboyance of many of the so-called 'godmen' of today. He is a profound believer in India's ancient culture and perennial wisdom. His search of cosmic vision and of the truth of our complete being do not run counter to the strivings and struggles of daily life. He seeks to achieve a sublime harmony and a creative synthesis in life and make the individual work for his own unique spiritual experience without being fettered by sectarian rigidity and ritualism.

The book which incidentally brought us together, though I cannot be called by any chance his devotee or disciple, is the present one and which provides a luminous introduction to problems of spiritual communion and development of wider and inward consciousness through Vivek (capacity for discernment), Shradha (Faith) and Anubhava (personal experience). As the book was written more than two decades ago, it has been revised by him and is being republished at the request of his many admirers and devotees. Though at time the book may seem deceptively simple, it deals with eternal verities and contains subtle truths. It has the intrinsic quality to inspire and stimulate a seeker in the realms of known and unknown spiritual dimensions to human life. But one requires self-discipline and 'flaming faith' for a successful quest. A book of this kind hardly needs any introduction. Yogi Raushan Nath has probably shown his personal consideration for me, in his own inimitable way, by asking me to write a few words by way of introduction, and I feel humble and **obliged in doing so.**

April 24, 1989

T.N. CHATURVEDI

AUTHOR'S NOTE

OM! Here is what I offer-an updated version of FLAMING FAITH (1967). Not the faith in its nascent state but a wordy picture of it.

Spellbound, I wrote a major part of it (1966)-the rest of it came by at one time or another.

Let me end with these timeless words:

..... before the coming of churches and temples, before men were certain about the object of their worship, an awareness of something higher and greater than themselves filled their hearts with rapture and their tongues with praise."*

There is nothing that is not. Man is! Faith is! God is!

* Acknowledgement: Bach, Mercuss. Ph.D., The Inner Ecstasy, Nash Villey,

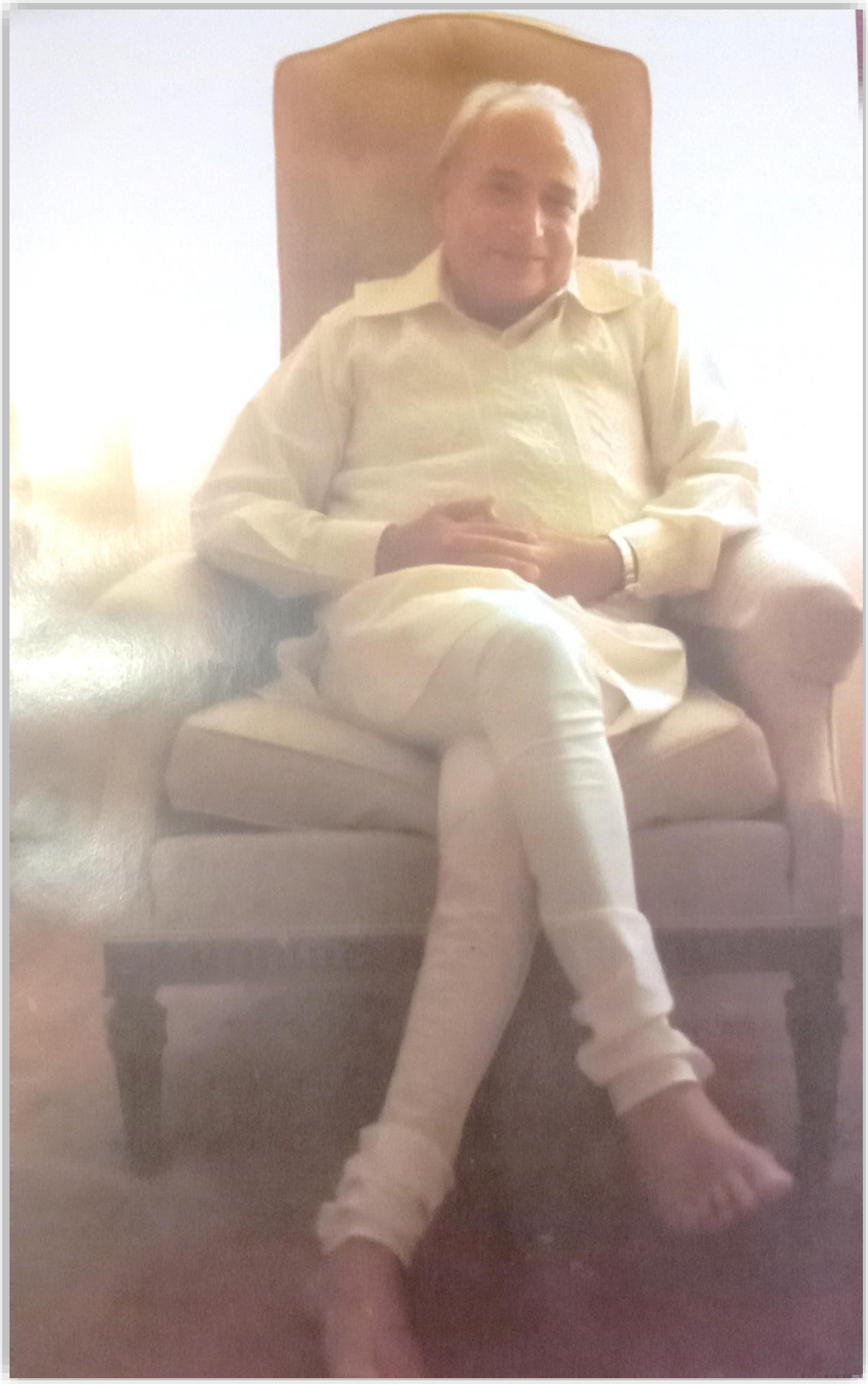
Tenn. 1969.

HERE I AM

OM! Early history of all the faiths shows how a great prophet animates his followers to a spirit of supreme sacrifice, surprising zeal and noble endeavour. He gives a new dimension to the converts' lives and they accomplish what they would never ordinarily achieve.

Unknown to them, in their hearts is liberated a new faith which sparks a miraculous revolution in the lives of ordinary men, women, and children. Their lives become dynamic, holy and great. Fired by the dynamics of a newly- liberated faith, they change the course of the world history.

It is this faith in its nascent state that I term FLAMING FAITH! MAY LORD BLESS ALL. OM!



JUST A WORD

OM! Life is a growing process. There is no finality about it. Whatever I say or write has no finality either. Take my words and make the necessary adaptations according to the need of the moment. What matters is the spirit of what is said, not the form or the tone.

Every age has its prophets and every epoch its masters. Every day-nay, every moment-has its own saintly persons to plan and prepare the field for Man-of-the-Moment, Man-of-the-Hour, Man-of-the-Day, Man-of-the-Epoch and Man- of-the-Age.

The task is eternal as Time is. At no time shall any man ever seek in vain. God willed it. A Voice is sure to respond helpfully. The Voice might emanate from the chosen person-an ordinary man, a saintly person, a Master or a Prophet of the Age.

Aspirant! Let nothing frustrate. Nor let anything make you sad. May faith make your life lively and glad. Smile your way through life with confidence-the confidence of a noble soul, a saint, a master, a prophet and the Man-Yet-to-Come.

God chooses you to be great in any field. Learn to pray and hope in all solemnity. Let His Word carry the day. Ignore those who lack faith. You are destined to be what He wills! Seek His Grace in whatever you do.

Time is precious. Hard to get at it. It is always on the run-running away from the ravenous fangs of the past. It is short of time. Leave it to its fate and come over. Providence needs you all the time. OM!

"Friend*, if you passing meet me and desire to speak to me,

why should you not speak to me? And why should I not speak to you?"

WALT WHITMAN

* I have preferred to put "Friend" instead of "Stranger" in the orginal text.

PART I

1. EACH WRINKLE: A LIVING EPITAPH

Each wrinkle that mars thy face

Is a living epitaph that cries-

"Herein lies a soul disgruntled, dissatisfied,

That nothing got from life, because it nothing gave."

Life is a mirror and a mighty dome;

Smile and it smiles back at thee,

Weep and ye hear an unending wail

That shall drown in its echo

Thy feeble cry. Dyed deep in black

Will the universe seem to be

If ye choose to wear black; but

Flushed in radiant sunlight white

Will it stand if ye shut not the portals of thy soul

Against soothing breeze of Grace and rays of hope.

BHATIA

2. SONG OF LIFE, LOVE AND THE LORD

OM! Hark! Providence has broken out into a song-the Song of Life, Love and the Lord. Providence is no stranger- It belongs wherefrom you sprang and whereupon your life rests.

The Song of Life, Love and the Lord goes on.

Now it is just a humdrum song. Now it is tempest-tossed. Soon it shall score and provoke life to give a call: "Live! Man live on."

Now it is full of zest. Its creativity is at its best. Now it only hums-as if fallen short of words.

Now it is ready to take wing-probably in hot pursuit of the horizons on-the-run.

The Song of Life, Love and the Lord goes on.

Now it rambles no aim whatever? Now it meanders

away... till it is a far cry in the wilderness.

The Song of Life, Love and the Lord goes on.

Now it is a short organ interlude.

Now it bursts out shrill and sharp. .... Soon it shall declare, "I have nothing to do with the shattered harp."

Not long after the harp that Time plays upon shall once again be well-attuned-one sublime whole.

The Song of Life, Love and the Lord goes on.

Now it is gladsome, joyous, enraptured wild. Now it is delighted to be growing blissfully wholesome.

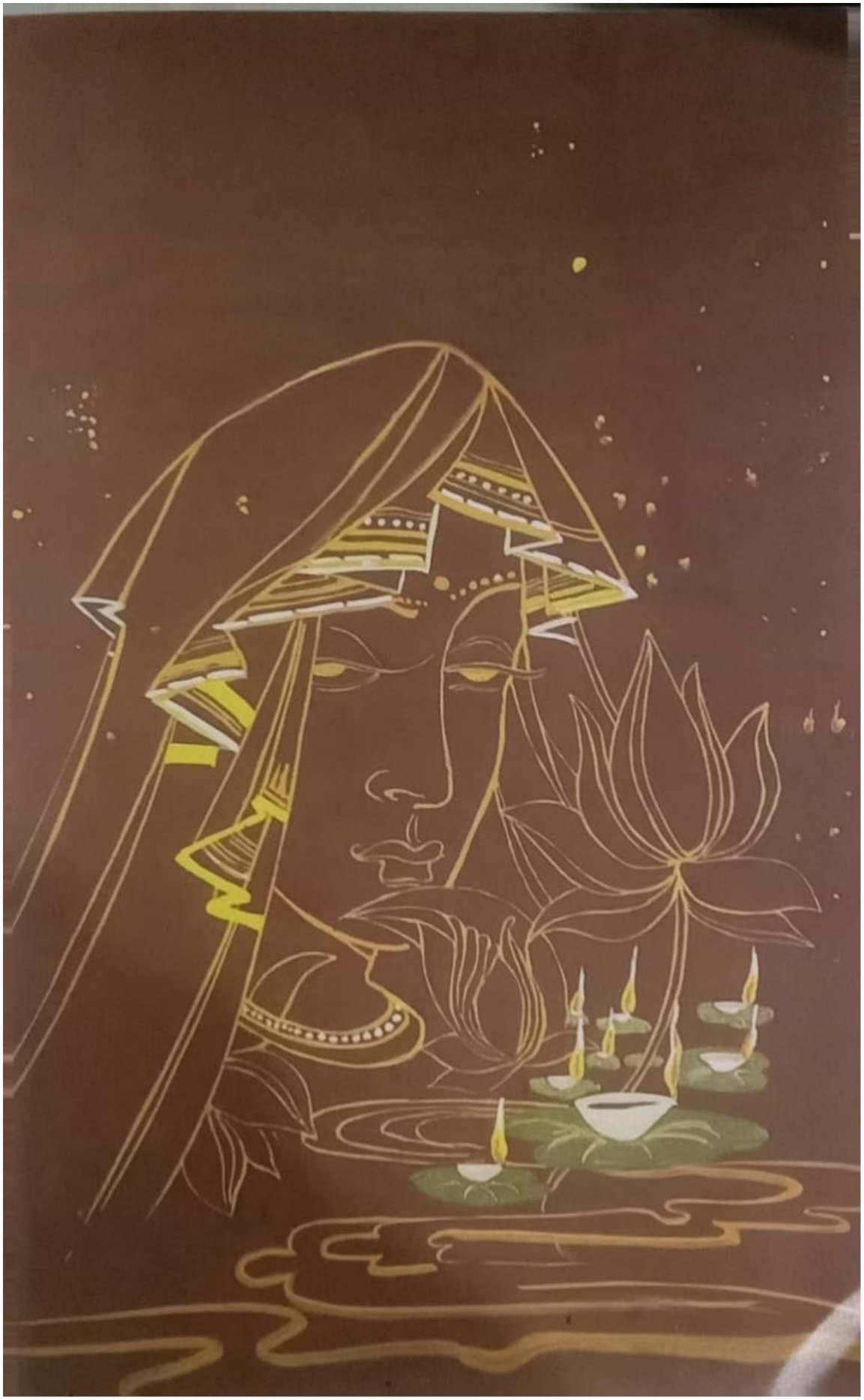
Now it is an exhilerating lyric of love, faith and hope. Now it is a sonnet-life is sonnetizing.

Now it is a spirited song of adventures and the heroic deeds that inspire awe. Now it is an epic great that relates the noble deeds of a legendary hero-It thrills, trills to stir human hearts.

The Song of Life, Love and the Lord goes on.

Now it is a tender lullaby. Now it stutters, it lisps-as a child would-a sweet nursery rhyme.

Now it is a stout, rough and tough sea song-out to rush



the distant lands.... to quell the splashes terrifying.

The Song of Life, Love and the Lord goes on.

Now it is aflame, flaming ever. .... Now it is full of fiery determination to burn down all that is. Pulses quickened, eyes bloodshot-people swell, yell; men stagger, swagger.... ready to give a blood bath.

Now it is a heartening yell of a yeoman. Now it is a terrifying war song.... rugged, unhewn, unhuman.

A mother panics. The babe in her arms is scared. The mother stretches out her arm to push a marauder back. Silent but anxious, tender but tearful, she thinks of her own soldier-man out somewhere on a battle front.

A bird flutters its wings and flees its nest-a haven of comfort, rest.

Poised to prey, an eagle is of a sudden scared. It flies away. A lion gives up its kill and scurries into its own den-A startled stag stares in stupid surprise-then it runs, runs and runs-No wonder ....

Now hear! No voice as such-only grunts. Now the moving feet echo in step; out of step soon after. The drums beat with horrifying vehemence-mingled with heartrending shrieks and sad bewailings.

Why? But why?

Now the voice is sorrowing, it laments. It is distressed.

Tragic indeed! But nobody knows the wherefore of it.

Still.... The Song of Life, Love and the Lord goes on.

Now the voice is far-removed. It is distant. It is trailing off into a cry in the wilderness.

The Song of Life, Love and the Lord goes on.

Now the voice is in agony .... in tears as it were. Now it is smiling to smile its tears away.

Lo! Of a sudden it bursts into a hilarious song. No wonder, The hearty Song of Life, Love and the Lord races forward with reckless abandon.

Once again the voice is in voice! It is in tune. Providence forgets, it ever sang sing-song.

Once it was an extravagant rhapsody-now it is an unforgettable melody. It is a song of sober living-good sense prevailing. It loves all. Man wakes up. He is wide awake. The awareness is super human, it is edifying!

The Song of Life, Love and the Lord goes on and on....it is mollifying.

Here! It's soulfully rippling. It is vibrating with the overtones of divinity. Here, it is a revealing whisper- Providence ready to share something?

But why does the dialogue disturb? It is not easy to make a head or tail of it. ....

The Song of Life, Love and the Lord goes on.

Now the voice is picking up. It's daring all, everything. It decries evil-lauds the good. It beautifies the unseemly and embellishes the loveability. And it unravels many a beautiful dimension of the Song of Life, Love and the Lord.

The Song of Life, Love and the Lord goes on.

Now the song is ready to reveal a whole world of worthwhile values-mundane, ordained, human and divine.

The Song of Life, Love and the Lord goes on.

God is Great! Life is breathing in and breathing out a blissful breath of life.

The Song of Life, Love and the Lord goes on.

Of a sudden the song of life, love and the Lord lifts up its voice and calls: "Oh! The melody that disturbs! Oh! The melody that soothes .... Oh! The melody that arouses faith and wakes up the echoes that sanctify."

The Song of Life, Love and the Lord goes on.

It edifies the higher human aspiration to glimpse the Most High.

Lo! The infinite space is shrinking back into an eternity of Time .... and its jinglings.

Here, Time jingles not, nor wakes up echoes..... Amazing. But wait. The end is not yet It will go on ....

The Song of Life, Love and the Lord goes on, goes on and on and on and on.... .... OM!

3. LONE ASPIRANT THAT YOU BE

OM! Friend! Lone aspirant that you be, you have stepped out of life you know and have walked into another, a strange world it is! Full of strangers? Be not scared. Pick up courage and look ahead!

Don't look back. I know. There they loved, valued, and did cherish you. They were gentle, tender and sweet. And here you are where nobody seems to care! Nobody cares to talk. Is that what holds you back?

Friend! Toddle on! God above sees all. The Kindly Eye does benevolently watch. The Kindly Light is anxious to lead. Be assured and hopefully toddle on.

You meet a person here. You meet a person there. Nobody seems to care. Strangers all. They have no heart for a stranger, alas! The Sacred Heart however, is athrob. God loves you. He loves all.

Here is a world of new values. You know not what to do with it. And what the strangers offer, you know not the why and wherefore of it.

Don't feel sad. Why get mad? You are not a non-entity. You are somebody. You matter!

Why keep mum? In the forlorn disquiet of many a restless night why sulk? You are not alone. God is with you. And to Him belongs this world of strange new values.

Let men who want, make merry. Let the flesh scented be. Pleasure is their game and pleasure is what they aim. There are pleasures they live on, and there are the pleasures that live upon them-till the very bones are bared and everything begins to smell. I wish they knew the gladness of giving, the joy of living, the bliss that virtue brings. Ah, the gladness of heart then when man takes to walk His Path.

Living only for the pleasures of flesh and the delight of sensual gratification was never ordained for man. If anybody thinks so and takes to it, he becomes a human problem.

The mind, the intellect and all that he is, man must activate them all to realize the purpose of being. The human destiny is there to be fulfilled. No option whatever. It's imperative! Man shall act and shall as well be concerned about the creditability of whatever he does. Misfortune is not of anybody else's doing. For that man should thank himself or his doings.

Aspirant! I have reached the end of a fancy flight. Haven't I spoken of the much talked about Law of Karma? I wonder. I don't know. OM!

4. NO BLIND FAITH FOR YOU

OM! Aspirant! You choose what you do. Nobody elects what you prefer. No blind faith for you-never. You do not want to be led blind-folded, tongue-tied-ever. Your mind rebels at the very idea of it, for you are human. And choice is the essence of a human being, his behaviour.

Sure well you know, nobody makes or mars your future. None can ever demolish your faith unless you concede under pressure or otherwise.

That settles it. God has chosen you. You are one of the chosen few. Presently, I know no other.

Friend! You were always before my mind as and when I write. I know what seeking is and how it works the mind. Here I recklessly scatter words that had been kept close to the heart. Pick up those you want and let others be where they be. OM!

5. CRISIS OF FAITH

OM! Seeker! Life's progress-even survival-in the face of its turmoils and tensions, frictions and factions, minor annoyances and major heartbreaks, seems difficult. It often tends to leave you baffled.

Then, in your life there comes many an anxious moment when despite normal everyday life you face a deep crisis of faith. You are then gripped by an uneasy feeling, a feeling of groping in the dark.

As the crisis deepens, you begin to feel unequal and are uncertain about all, about everything. Your faith in many a value of life gets a jolt and is shaken. Now you start worrying about little things. Even failures of no significance-yours as well as others-rack your nerves. Frustration sets in which hurts less, annoys more. For no apparent reason you feel strangely uneasy and are in the sulks.

Now idle controversies, meaningless quibbles and trivial subtleties of religious dogmas begin to sap your beliefs. You feel shaky and this weakens your boldness of purpose and it undermines your will to work. Despite all this, however, your interest in life doesn't wane; it grows instead. You are in no mood to quit doing things.

As the crisis of faith deepens more and more, you are unnerved as never before; and you are out to grasp whatever promises a happy release from that which fetters life, trammels it or hems it in. Alas, you know not the wherefore of it.

Suddenly you find a desperate need clamouring for an immediate fulfilment. Oh, the anguish of not knowing what you exactly need. Nor your questing spirit has any lead. That bewilders you. You feel uneasy.

In desperation, you look out. You want to be free from any uncertainty that baffles or assails your mind.

You pick up courage and turn to your beliefs for guidance, maybe help. There is no response however. Even prayers fall flat and nothing ever stirs. Crisis deepens!

Now a feeling of emptiness starts gnawing at the tendrils of your heart. Tension mounts up; it unquiets. Howsoever much you rake up, you cannot find the wherefore of it. Unnerved, you sob, your heart bleeds.

As the feeling of emptiness grows, you feel distressed. In a desperate bid to get relief, you dig deep into the beliefs. You find them wanting. Oh, the tragedy. They fail you when you needed them the most. And just imagine, on these very beliefs you had staked your all.

Anguished, you feel sore about it all. Have you all along been living in a fool's paradise? The very thought of it distresses.

Seeker! It's a crisis of faith. Nay, it's the crisis of life. Cut away from the safe moorings, the faith inside, you find yourself adrift and a strange fear seems to creep into your heart. It disturbs.

You look around hopefully. Something might still turn up. Your need for an enduring hope is desperate. It is difficult to hold on to the beliefs that belie trust. It's hard to perish for values of doubtful worth. That's like standing on the deck of a ship on fire. You want to be far away before it explodes and sinks.

Panic-stricken, you send out an S.O.S. call. Someone might still helpfully respond.

Hush-sh-sh! Solemn silence! Nothing seems to stir ever so little. You solemnly hope, however, that some benevolent power might still put you on top of the world. OM!

6. THE THAW

OM! Silence deepens!

Suddenly something occurs that calms you down and the serenity of the spirit sweeps away to your soul. Silence deepens!

The chitta-vrittis (the activated thoughts) begin to shrink back within themselves. You can feel their shrinking frontiers. As they shrink back, you too seem to melt away. Slowly you are being flattened to the ground. Visualize a candle-stick with a broad base and a short stem-that is how you look like as you envision yourself.

A flash, and upon you descends a strangely soothing quietude. As well, a strange warmth gladsomely gushes forth to wrap you with.

A suggestion of a friendly smile at first, then the smile broadens. It comforts, it soothes.

A leaf bud about to burst-that is how you feel and are now. You are restless and athrill and are ready to burst into …alas, you know not what…

Now your body writhes as if in anguish deep. Your hands flutter in utter desperation. Human limitations thwart your winging away heavenwards. Oh, the anguish and the pain. No buoyancy of spirit, nor any gladdening hope. Your eyes are streaming with tears. Alas, limitations are far too strong to be trifled with. Utterly helpless and distressed, you give out a call: "Where art Thou, my Lord?" OM!

7. HOPE

OM! You had found a voice and you did call out to your Lord, the Ultimate Absolute.

Now; as if from nowhere a soulful voice calls out and you are alive with hope. The confrontation is sudden and sharp. You are bewildered, helpless and in pain.

From the anguish of the heart, rises yet another call. No voice, no words. Only lightning flashes and claps of thunder. You feel as if struck by their vehemence. You get jerks now and then.

You are shaken. You shiver. Not with cold but with a strange force that vibrates and gives jolts. A strange sort of wistfulness afflicts your heart and you feel like crying. So very helpless you feel that at last you do sob out. You are in deep agony of the spirit.

You stagger and you fall-right where you are. You throw your hands up as if in a desperate bid to catch whatever had eluded your grasp. Violently the body twists about-why so? Hard to explain.

Yet another flash. You collect yourself and are on your knees. The hands fold themselves in all solemnity. And a heartfelt prayer breezes over your face. Your lips part you also want to pray maybe.

Still another flash! This time its vehemence puts you back on your feet. Now you stand and shudder. You cannot hold on-you fall. Maybe the fall hurts you, maybe not--but you regain your everyday consciousness and know where you are. Slowly the happenings around begin to register themselves in your brain with the human thinking faculty.

What's it? You find yourself perspiring from top to toe. Tears well up in your eyes and from the depths of your heart rises another prayer. You cry-and strangest of all-you laugh as well. Face lifted heavenward you sit in a meditative pose-to pray, maybe.

Presently a serene smile spreads across your face and in a warm heavenly glow you are bathed. You are thus blessed with hope-God's grace and His goodwill.

Here! Though eyes closed, you see a mellow light all around. Before your mind's eye slowly emerges a snow- white figure-effulgent, serene.

On a gleaming platform-a graciously smiling figure of man is seated-one hand raised and the other resting on his knee.

Lo! There! A figure of a woman suddenly appears as if from nowhere. Superb and mystifying she stands-one arm raised high and the other hanging alongside.

I stop here. Normally I do not describe the occurrence of a vision lest a seeker should begin to anticipate it. A vision is always individually one's own.

Now; that was a vision* of Shiva and Shakti. Any day, any time I would love to envision it and be blessed. OM!

* In a vision the figures that appear are elusive and of light-The light in which man sees them is essentially mellow. The vision may start with a dazzling flash, but that is a touch-and-go affair.

If the light of a vision is not beautifully bluish white (दिव्य, divya), but is yellowish white, the vision then does not mean anything.

Visualize the light that appears a little before daybreak and add to it a heavenly bluish white glow to make it diva (दिव्य).

8. GRACE

OM! God is! Nobody dare deny that. So often we, however, take to talking of His Grace. I wanted to write about IT, but I will not, for I cannot.

Just as God is beyond me to express in words, Grace too defies any attempt to enunciate it. God and His Grace are one integrated WHOLE and there can be no isolation.

So I leave it at that and leave it to you, dear reader, to pacify your curiosity inside. I am human. OM!

9. HOWSOEVER PHENOMENAL A SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE

OM! Howsoever phenomenal a spiritual experience, you do, at last, find yourself in the everyday world again. Here you are! You feel light, relaxed. You get up and start romping about. You feel as lively as the fresh morning breeze and are as if floating in the air-high above the unyielding earth.

Now; you sit down, smile and look around. You bubble over with the buoyancy of the spirit. God is kind. You seem to have chanced upon some blissful find. Swinging your arms and eyes turned skyward, you get up and start walking gleefully wild. Oh, the exuberance of it.

Now your whole being is rousing itself into an awareness sublime. It is as a flower opens up, petal by petal, to full bloom. You are full of joy and gladsomely alive with a creative enthusiasm.

A revealing urge, a rousing drive for the quest and a venturesome buoyancy of the spirit to raise your hopes high.

Destined or not, you are ready to give a new stance to your life. It's just the start however. What next? Hard to say. What lies ahead of you, lies ahead of me too. For guidance let both of us look up to Him. OM!

10. WAKING UP

OM! Though the benevolent spirit of the Lord readily helps man to the Path of self-realizations, yet a spiritual experience is not an everyday occurrence.

Here you are! A while ago you were quite upset, but now that by His Grace you have woken up, you romp about blissfully as if you have chanced upon something gratifying. Oh, the exuberance of it! Aglow and agleam you pray in all solemnity. The prayer is a ripple of conversation with God, our Lord, in order to convey: "Ah! Though so near, yet You are so far away...."

Quick is the response however: "Nobody is as near to you as I am!"

Oh! The thrill! You start waking up, you are awake....

Now that you are awake: Inspired by a new drive and fired by the flaming faith you would open up-petal by petal to full bloom No more standing high and dry, you strive to shape your own destiny in consonance with your higher aspirations. Now onward-the life you live will not be somebody else's concern but your very own responsibility. Henceforth be responsibly alive and lively.

Seeker! A strong sense of participation is growing. You are keen to shape your own destiny and not leave it to fate or whosoever that be. It's only a start however. You are not yet fully aware of the implications of the modern science and its wonderful achievements. Of course the mind is there to help. Usually it had been running errands for one known sense or the other-but its role in life is yet to be examined. So far it has always risen to the occasion to face the challenge of life and its growing process.

Now that you are awake:

Inspired by a new drive and fired by a flaming quest, you are full of joy and blissfully alive with a creative enthusiasm. Fired by a revealing urge, a rousing drive, a glad buoyancy of the spirit-you would not stand high and dry. Life is yours and yours alone.... it's you! OM!

11. THE QUEST

OM! While questing you tackle the mind at all its levels, but off and on you get frustrated. So often the means itself becomes a barrier and you don't know what to do about it. Time and time again you turn to God for direction, for comfort also.

Friend! It is not the mind but your own approach to the problem that is at fault. Standing at the crossroads you ponder and find that the potential of the mind is being wasted in

the tedium of running petty errands for one sense organ or another. A colossal waste indeed.....

Not knowing what to do you look around for guidance. Finding none forthcoming, you turn to your mind once again. As you do that, you see the (by now) chastened mind rise like a Sphinx from underneath the surface- consciousness.

Awed you look around for something that would help.....

Finding none forthcoming you pray hard. Your prayer puts you in the mind of the Lord and a voice is heard to say: "What you quest is the quest itself."

Who said it? The mind? The Lord? I do not know. But now I know that I know. Oh! The bliss of it!

Seeker dear, don't labour the point. It is enough and enough is always enough. OM!

12. THE POINT OF NO RETURN

OM! Aspirant! You have reached a point of no return. Now you cannot turn round and say: "The quest is not for me, it is for someone else."

Find your faith to find your God. Help your faith to find

• Winged monster of Thebes with a woman's head and lion's body who proposed a riddle to the Thebans, killed all who could not guess it; and on Oedipus's solving it, threw herself from the rock on which she sat, and died.

its voice. The faith that talks and feels is a living faith-both live and alive. Living faith when fired by His grace is the flaming faith.

Seeker! Do the doubts still assail your mind? Never mind if they do. I do not mind them either. They are there- nobody can help it. Even when you stand on the very threshold of God-realization, they turn up to mystify you. It appears that the doubts-like everything else human-are essential for the human growth. Hence go ahead in spite of them.

Give your doubts a positive edge-that of hope, love and faith-and add a new dimension to your quest-that of flaming earnestness. Thus armed go in quest of "the Holy Grail"- your ultimate aim.

Take heart! In the twilight of the spiritual dawn, so often you find yourself in the presence of the Lord. At times He is so near that His "breath" makes you blissfully tremor and tingle. OM!

Whenever anguished or facing a desperate crisis of faith, upbursts the Grace of the Lord to ward off any mishap.

13. SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE

OM! A spiritual experience brings man face to face with God and gives him an intense longing for rising to a higher human stature. It makes his life dynamically holy and exalts him to a higher level of spiritual awareness. To him God is then not some mystic Abstraction, but is a flaming Inspiration and a living Presence.

A spiritual experience inspires man to contain the turbulent passions and to sublimate them ultimately. It conditions his wishful thinking even to the changed spiritual circumstance.

What happens?

A spiritual experience makes a great sensation. It electrifies like a live current. Its thrill runs up and down man's spine and his hair stand on end. It dazzles in the first instance but soon allows life to settle down.

While still in the throes of a spiritual experience, man feels an awesome tension mounting up. There is something solemn in the air. The face is aglow and delightfully warm. Except for the warmth of the glowing face and the burning sensation near the ears, there is not much of body- consciousness left.

Man hears a continuous murmur that hums sometimes high, sometimes low, sometimes mellow, sometimes sharp. Now and then, a voice is heard from within saying something- but all is so quick and sudden that the aspirant finds it difficult to make out anything.

As it goes on, the humming thrills and the vibrations find it difficult to shake off the left-over body consciousness. Off and on, before the mind's eye, there is a sudden flash and the whole body is awhirl.

Now; the mind is still-no tense moments. The breathing is regular and rhythmic. Unknown to man on its own the Pranayama has been going on. Sometimes man is bathed in perspiration, its water running down the spine and all over the face.

And lo, the tears well up in the eyes and down the aspirant's cheeks they run in small streams. Despite it all, he remains calm and still. His face is wreathed in smiles, as the

humming chimes steady and sweet. He experiences a throbbing emotional thrill. That enthralls.

Now he wrings his hands and his body writhes as if in dire pain. The eyes are closed and he is lost in a heavenward prayer. Tensed up and athrill that's what our spiritually aroused person is!

The aspirant's body sometimes bends backwards, more than what is ordinarily possible. But the spine is none the worse for it. He bends forward and the hands move making strange signs that are in the world of yoga mudras. The mudras are not mere movements of the hands but are conducive to human growth-at all levels.

Now the body aches around the shoulders. There is an unusual turmoil* in the region of the heart.

Now, there is an uprush-man suddenly becomes conscious-strangely quiet but tensed up. Tingling with joy, he is in tears and crying also.

Aspirant! A spiritual experience is a dialogue with God. It is a rousing way of worship. Never mind what the words mean and what they are. Make it a point to experience its indomitable spirit and the grit of it. One word of warning, however. Neither anticipate nor try for a particular spiritual experience as described by someone else. Your spiritual experience is essentially in consonance with your own higher aspirations. OM!

14. FAITH IN ITS NASCENT STATE

OM! Aspirant! A spiritual experience arouses man spiritually. From this mystic state rises a new faith. The faith that is thus 'liberated' is in its nascent** state. It is just beginning to be, it is in the throes of being born. Usually that is how I enunciate the *flaming faith.*

* I mention this specifically, because this turmoil disturbs. This can be easily mistaken for a pressure on the heart. It might alarm and unquiet the aspirant. Sometimes, man might feel a sort of nausea. Because of it, an aspirant is expected to fast more often, and to eat in moderation. "Yuktaahaar vihaarasya (युक्ताहार विहारस्य)," says the Gita.

** Every student of elementary science knows that the hydrogen molecule consists of two atoms. However, when hydrogen is prepared the atoms are liberated singly. They soon join up into pairs to form molecules. At the moment of liberation, hydrogen is found to take part in chemical changes with certain substances-these changes, however, do not occur when the molecules of the gas are allowed to come into contact with those very

substances. Such hydrogen-wherein its atoms haven't joined up as yet to form molecules-is called nascent, meaning in the act of being born.

This flaming faith-faith in its nascent state-is more dynamic and has a greater drive than the faith which is ordinarily there in our hearts. The Kindly Light sparks it. It illumines man's heart and it reveals higher truths of life! It's God's benevolence in the offing. It's His kripa (कृपा), daya (दया), Rehmat (रहमत) that the faithful aspire after.

In this newborn faith, the promise for redemption finds its fulfilment. It's what the devotees aspire after and look forward to. It's man's hope-a fond aspiration that by His Grace all will end well. It endures even when all seems lost in this ever changing world.

The dynamics of the faith in its nascent state helps man to know that life is a growing process. Once this realization dawns upon him, he gladly accepts change, decay and death as integral parts of life's growing process. Assured thus, he lives with added zest and greater self-confidence.

The spiritual drive of this newborn faith brings about a change in both man's personality and identity. As well, there is a vital change in his way of living which opens up new horizons of human understanding. Man finds himself possessed by a new dynamic self that readies him for self- realization.

Then; such is the dynamic force of this faith in its nascent state that man begins to aspire higher and higher. His life is blessed with a new drive, new direction. Coming events cast their shadows before and man's talk so often becomes prophetic.

There is a change at the physical level, too. Though subtle, it is pronounced. All the sense-organs grow in stature to meet the challenge of the spiritually awakened self. They function better to help develop the, as yet, undiscovered human potential. Man is better prepared to face the challenge of disease, decay and death. Man begins to feel youthful and sprightly, both in body and in spirit. His mind extends its frontiers farther and farther to discover the so far undiscovered areas.

Animated by the change brought about by faith in its nascent state, man taps his mind's latent potential for greater self-awareness. .... What that would mean to man, only the life of a realised soul can unravel or reveal.

Apparently man remains the same but there is a remarkable change within. The uprush of the psychic powers startles people around and they are awed, they wonder.

Awe-struck, they are drawn to the spiritually awakened person. To them, now he is a noble soul and a saintly person, endowed with spiritual powers.

Man's voice becomes deep and vibrant. It vibrates with emotions of love, service and devotion. He means what he says. Even when he is in the wrong, he means well. His words inspire confidence and people find their faith by his blessings. He is always beaming with joy and his very presence inspires confidence.

It's a joyous experience to meet and be with a spiritually awakened person. The change is remarkable and attracts attention. Men find it difficult to ignore him or do him harm.

It is as if man is being remade. He becomes truly a seeker and a sage. His life is sanctified and he grows in moral and spiritual stature.

A realized person rises to the occasion whenever an occasion arises. He is afire with a confidence and faith that exalt.

There is another welcome change that helps him to face any challenge that might thwart his progress at any level.

On the physical plane man eats just enough and from what little he eats he derives much greater strength. He sleeps light, but what little sleep he gets gives him adequate relaxation. All this and much more becomes possible. A new mystic element of surprise takes over.

Behold! Animated by the faith in its nascent state, man sparks gladness of heart and beams with heavenly bliss. He begets vibhutis (विभूति, supernatural powers). These supernatural powers inspire an unshakable faith in human destiny being supreme.

A spiritually awakened person helps and heals. His physical presence works wonders, miracles even. But that in fact is a passing phase. Soon he turns to the transcendental values of life for self-fulfilment and God-realization.

All this, and much more occurs when the faith in its nascent state rises from a spiritual experience and takes over. Man beams with joy because of the confidence that it arouses. His life becomes hallowed, and he experiences the benevolent presence of the Lord.

Faith in its nascent state is an exalted spiritual phenomenon. It strikes like lightning to scorch the ungodly and fills man's heart with spiritual fervour.

Truly speaking, the faith in its nascent state is no faith as the word faith is normally understood. It's not a mere article of faith but it is what a spiritual experience wakes up, activates and quickens. .... It has in it what makes a sage, a prophet even. (My widest search fails to find a word that would convey the true spirit of this revealing experience.) In a way the divinity of man comes to life in man and he begins to live it.

Faith in its nascent state is the vehemence of a profound spiritual stamina. It is much more than a mere spiritual breakthrough.

Aspirant! Religion apart, if you quest in all earnestness a crisis of faith is likely to develop in your life.

In such an event, declare forthwith a state of emergency and step up the vigour of your life.

With sublime dignity and serene sobriety, be disciplined and orderly. Do not ever act irresponsibly. No idle talk, nor any waste of time. Give up wasteful habits. Help your neighbour. Avoid rumour-mongering. Face facts and act firmly to further human advancement.

You need all the strength-physical, mental, moral and spiritual-to fulfil human destiny.

Let God be not a mere belief or some make-believe faith.

He is beyond all speculations, faiths, beliefs and tradition-God is! OM!

15. HOMECOMING OF MAN

OM! Aspirant! One swallow on its swift graceful flight will not make a summer. Nor will just one spiritual experience make man a divine messenger of God overnight. But it augurs well and should fill his heart with great expectations and aspirations.

Brihadaranyaka Upanishad says:

"आत्मा वा अरे द्रष्टव्यः श्रोतव्यो मन्तव्यो निदिध्यासितव्यः"

"Man must constantly aspire to walk with God and talk to Him."

While treading the hallowed path, man has to face many a time, many a crisis of commitment, courage and faith. Even today he has to endure many an ordeal and stand many a trial-although human nature has undergone a sea of changes through the

centuries. Man needn't however be disheartened, nor should he give up hope, for God is with him in every sense of the word.

From a spiritual experience emerges a strong sense of destiny and an awareness sublime that fires hope, quickens faith and enlivens human aspirations. By and by man begins to realize that he was never alone nor ever forsaken. He belongs somewhere-nowhere else but the One and Only.

That fills man's heart with a unique hope. This hope is neither a mere expectation nor a desirable probability- instead it is a deep conviction that man shall not perish leaving no trace behind. Neither a total annihilation nor an absolute dissolution is his doom. It isn't, it wasn't, nor shall it ever be!

Inspired by this incomparable hope let man ignore the dark cloud and pin his faith on its silver lining. No gloomy thoughts nor any forebodings.

In consonance with the human spirit this phenomenal hope will spark an awareness sublime. As a result thereof the man-self will step down and the divine-self shall take over. As it happens, the very next moment the effulgent angels rush forward to claim their kingdom lost. They rejoice and set out to make man a worthy son of the worthy Father! OM!

16. GURU-DIKSHA * ENUNCIATED

OM! Aspirant! Once while meditating, an aspirant went into a trance. It was a regular meditation session there. When the trance was over, he got up and went away without saying a word about it and many people were at all.

I met him later at a friend's place. Being eager to hear about his spiritual experience, I walked up to him. He looked up and said: ".... nothing doing. I do not want to have anything to do with you or your Yoga."

"Yoga is not my personal affair. It is a way of life....." said I.

"If I were to go into a trance like that in the office, I could lose my job. My boss wouldn't care to see whether I was in a trance or fast asleep."

I stood wondering, as he walked away.

Later I asked myself: "Why should he lack faith in the Lord's ways?"

Quietly I turned to Him for guidance because the aspirant's remarks were so odd. Presently, a whisper seemed to say: "A keen sense of query and quest and a ready response to a spiritual experience are imperative.

"As it is essential to prepare the soil before a seed is sown, so it should also be in the case of a questing heart. It should be actuated and readied for a spiritual experience." OM!

* Guru-diksha is initiation but with a difference. The guru initiates, actuates and activates the soul force-not only that of the disciple but his own too. In a way it is an integrated endeavour both by the guru and his disciple for self-realization.

17. THAT REMINDS ME

OM! Aspirant! That reminds me: There was a friend of mine, a devout person. He had set habits and was regular in his prayers. He would perform certain rituals, come what may. He would recite the same mantra every day for a particular number of times. That was his daily routine.

One day, a friend of his managed to take him out for a walk. They walked on, till they reached the Ravi river bank. There, my friend got restless. It was his prayer time; he wanted to rush back home. Unmindful of the anxiety and the uneasiness felt by my friend, the gentleman remarked: "Oh! The sublimity of the dawning day! Look! How the river waters reflect its glory and the clouds above are aglow with pride!" My friend had no stomach for such niceties of nature, however.

"I am getting late for my puja. I must go," said he.

The gentleman ignored the plea and went on: "My dear friend, beware of your virtue. Once you accept its authority, your lips are sealed once for all. You lose all initiative for the creative thought. And emotions stir you not to fill your heart with love of life. Send your god on a holiday. Let us look around and gasp and .... Why can't you meditate here?" His voice trailed off into silence.

My friend protested, but was soon carried away by the beauty all around. The flowing waters, the riot of colour, the dynamic spell of the small hours-all conspired to quicken his mind, imagination also, and charmed him away from the monotonous routine rituals. Eyes wide open and his gaze gathering unto itself the mystic beauty of the rising sun, he sat down then and there to pray and meditate. No wooden beads to count, no senseless

burning of the incense either. There he was, listening to the voice of the sublimity with rapt attention!

A gladdened heart it was that enjoyed playing truant. No monotonous routine any more. He felt happy like a schoolboy, who misses the school to roam about, merrily plucking wild flowers.

It was almost midday when our friend could drag himself away from this spiritual spree. All the time his friend sat sulking, bored, and tired of waiting-under the shade of a tree nearby.

Later in the day, my friend told his colleague boisterously: "To break away from a monotonous routine is the road to progress: To climb out of the deep ruts of long-established habits is a rousing experience.

"To be hemmed in by inhibitions shackles our minds, hampers our progress. We lose initiative and listlessly drag ourselves along the ruts-the beaten tracks. All zest for life is lost and we go on living mechanically. We miss the go and the thrill of being alive!"

He got up, yelled gleefully aloud and jumped in the air on to a seat beside his friend. With a wild sweep of his arms, my friend continued: "As I sat there, I felt a strange joy surging within. Soon all sense of time was lost, and I was strangely aware of another dimension flaming into view.

"Though eyes closed, I saw the sun rise in the east. Its rays rushed forward to engulf me. I remember, I raised my hands high. I saw them both gleam and they were resplendent. Strangest of all-I could see my entire being, turn into a flaming splendour, a luminous orb-bright and ablaze."

Lost in reverie, he was quiet and sat still. Bathed in a rare sweetness, he was tingling with the joy of it. When he came to, he heard the gentleman say: "How lucky you are! You had had an experience of Surya-Namaskara (सूर्य-नमस्कार)." "What is it that you talk of? I know not….

"Surya Namaskara is one of the yogic practices that the yogis practise as the day dawns. In your case, your faith and devotion have worked a miracle…..

My friend cut him short and said: "That gives me an idea. The yogi does not worship the sun as such. He is conditioned by the practice to take in and imbibe the spirit of the sun. I wish I could add more.

At the end he added: "That's not all the story. It was a day of surprises. I had to meet that day a foreign scientist. He was

to deliver a lecture for the benefit of my students. On the way back, I was reminded of it by my colleague.

"Here! The college gate. I am a little anxious. The Principal might have already met the honoured guest.

Anyway, it was time I should have taken my class.

"I walk up to my chair. There on the table lay a letter. I pick it up and read.

"The letter is from the visiting professor. He has written that he will not be able to keep the appointment. He will be late, he said. Now he himself would come to meet me in my classroom. Will that be all right, sir?

"Letter in hand, I stood wondering. I was in tears. The bell rang. The students came in. I was in time for my class. Quite in time for the foreign dignitary's visit as well. God is great!

"The boys sat down. Those who were late tiptoed in. It was all so quiet-not the slightest murmur. No usual whispers even. I wondered.... Suddenly one of the students got up and said: 'Sir! Tell us how far a scientist's mind can accept the existence of God.'

"So that was that. God had come to stay ...."

The foregoing occurrence is from life. My friend who experienced it was a professor of science at Lahore and he related it all to me when we were discussing meditation and spiritual experiences. OM!

18. A MIRACLE OF THE FLAMING FAITH

OM! Once upon a time, a seeker went to a saint for guidance. The kindly guru tried his best to talk him into awareness of God, but could not.

"Sorry, young man. No need to despair however. Here, take it."

The disciple looked at the image of the Lord and hesitated.

"Not just a sculptured stone, God is in it. You cannot see Him but He does."

"He sees all right-but .... I also want to see Him," the seeker replied.

"Worship Him in all solemnity and be blessed with His benign Presence."

Taking his guru at his word the disciple placed the image on the altar in a temple far away from the proverbial madding crowd. There-he would get ready early and worship the Lord as directed. Time passed. More time passed. In the course of time, daily rituals became a routine affair and he went through them mechanically. No buoyancy of spirit, nor the fire of worship to animate him- only listless goings about.

That too could however not go on for long. At last the crisis of belief overtook him and he felt all the more miserable. Disgusted and badly stung, one day, he walked away leaving the temple doors ajar.

In a town nearby the aspirant found himself being taken care of by a girl of ill-repute. She readily agreed to accompany him for a night of dining and wining and love.

Both young and gay and groomed, in the gathering dusk they began to get ready for the nightlong gaieties. It was going to be a jolly good night for the ascetic-the wine, a beautiful woman and her sensuous charm-ready to rake him up inside out.

The youthful charmer danced full of life and verve. She was lovely, young and sweet. And all the charms of her lewd trade were not unknown to her.

To warm up the dark cold night, a fire had been hastily built and it was burning bright. Higher rose its flames that cast their weird shadows on the trees around.

Used to charming her way to the hearts of men, the dancing girl closed in upon the young runaway male. Eyes flashing a suggestive charm, herself all afire with a fierce desire and charmed, she filled her cup with her choicest wine and ....

As he shivered with a strangely tingling desire, she brought the cup close to his lips. He hesitated as his cloistered virtue felt nonplussed and tottered. The young charmer however was in no mood to accept defeat. She nestled her beautiful head on his shoulder. Oh, the devastating lure of it.

Now they were alone, just the two of them. Never were a man and a woman desired so much by each other. The man swooned in her arms as she nestled closer to him.

Again, he shivered as something hot surged within. He groaned as the spurt of rising passions gave him tremors. Suddenly he leapt aside as if struck by lightning. Before the woman could say anything, he struck her full in the face and shouted at the top of his voice: "You fool! Can't you see that we are not alone? The door is ajar and the Lord is watching. For shame!" He stood where he was, for..

There! To his utter dismay, on the altar where the image was, now stood the Lord!

"But why? Why today of all the days?" the ascetic muttered helplessly. In response, as it were, the Lord spoke in measured rumbling tones: "It is only today of all the days that you were truly aware THAT I AM!"

Next morning people flocked to the temple in great numbers and it was hard for the ascetic to explain what had really happened. He was too much full of the Miraculous to say anything. But the people talked.

Someone remarked: "I have heard him talk to the Lord." Another one said: "He has not only found his faith but has also found his God."

Still another confided: "Though he had to face a deep crisis of commitment and faith, he got over it by God's grace."

He was right. For, it was not only a deep crisis but it was also the moment of his destiny. OM!

PART II

1. THE SEEKER, THE WAY AND THE SAGE

OM! Three essentials of the quest are: the Seeker, the Way, and the Sage.

"If there is a Way and not a Sage, it will not expand. If there is a Sage but no Way, nothing good will result. When a Way and a Sage are found together, then all men will become cultured and enlightened." It's true in all the fields of life. OM!

It is neither seeker nor the sage who is great. It is this unique relationship that deserves mention and praise. It brings out what is best in both the sage and the seeker.

2. DARE TO DIFFER

"Life is short, the art is long,

occasion sudden, experience

fallible and judgement difficult."

(An old saying)

OM! Dear Sir! It sounds hollow to my mind. Man shall always seek despite many such dampers.

Life is eternal. Man shall prevail. The art is long? Never mind the voice of despair. Man is always well within time to achieve it all in his stride.

Life being a growing process, the human art must also grow. As it grows, it's ever new and it looks rather difficult to cover it in one single span of life. Do we ever abandon a child because it grows and does not remain a tiny tot all its life for us to fondle and caress?

Occasion sudden? No, it's not. It's like an iceberg floating in the sea. Only a little is visible. The vast bulk of it is beneath the sea-surface. No wonder those who trust only what they see flounder and are shipwrecked. Every occasion is rooted down in the past, flourishes in the present and shall find its fulfilment in the future.

Experience fallible? History itself belies it. Experience lives supreme in human minds. Our own ignorance is to blame-for the human experience is infallible. It serves its purpose-perhaps not the same that we might like it to serve.

Judgement difficult? It is, and it is not. It depends on one's own experience, capacity and Viveka-the ability to judge, A shallow mind cannot do justice to the problem in hand. It might be trying to apply the same yardstick to both earth and the air. Viveka is however inherent in our will to live. Let us discover it to make the right decisions.

Aspirant! Life is a growing process. We must take note of the changed circumstance and act accordingly. Let nothing deter, nor divert our attention. Dare to differ, and grow wiser. OM!

Life is the vehicle for man's aspirations and the aspirations are the blueprints of what he aspires to achieve.

3. MAN, LOVE AND ART

OM! Dear Sir! So long as man is alive, he is guided by desires, sentiments and emotions. In the words of someone, "Love and Art make it worthwhile for man to live life here and hereafter."

Love? Though instinctive as well as intuitive, it is essentially human. Life without love is bleak-a howling wilderness. A gnawing feeling of emptiness sets in-and the heart bleeds. Though human, its theme is divinity. It inspires man to take to things of the spirit and to let love express itself as an art of noble living.

Life as an art: It creates nothing-it only reveals. But sometimes it conceals more than it reveals. That happens only when something goes wrong with it.

Because of being human, there is love in every heart. Because of art, there is beauty in all that is. To reveal them both-love and art-is essentially your task.

(i) Reveal beauty in what you do. Your doings ought to have a meaning and should be done purposefully.

(ii) Reveal love in love of life, love for all the living beings and in an unalloyed love of God-the Ultimate Goal in life. (iii) Reveal God as life's loftiest aspiration-to live as an ideal human being that takes care of his fellow beings and all that environs. ....OM!

4. YOU AND YOUR UNIVERSE

OM! Aspirant! Truly a wise man has said: "Thou thinkest thou art but a small thing whereas in thee is involved the whole universe."

That should give you confidence to face the future with courage. God made you what you are.

Behold! The Benevolent One has descended into life as Hope and Faith; both shall last as long as life endures. Be not a mere spectator.

Fired by a strong sense of sharing, gladly get involved in the life you live. If the wise and the enlightened were to stay away, others will make a mess of the whole thing.

Aspirant! Do not grudge nor merely grumble. Condemn not nor find faults. It's not human to be stand-offish. Join in, get together and help build a brave new world of exalted deeds and higher values. Help initiate, create and develop such conditions of life wherein none need sin nor tell a lie. Seek His Grace for this project divine.

If the legitimate needs are met with reasonably well, man will have little excuse to run into the arms of evil, or be its camp-follower. None can sin unless one can justify. Conscience is much too strong for man to defy. Repentance is sure to inspire atonement at one time or another. OM!

You err, you blunder; even behave low despite noble aspirations. Providence does it to jolt you out of a sense of self-complacency. Constant vigilance is needed for exalted growth.

5. MARRIAGE: A MIRACLE OF LOVE AND FAITH

OM! Sometime in the hoary past, man transcended animalism to initiate and develop the institution of marriage.

Marriage: Man and woman are a party to this sacred institution. Man is masculine and woman is feminine. God made the male and the female different-so very different that they fell apart in the early dawn of life's onward march to self-fulfilment. Call it the legend of Adam and Eve or Rudra's separating Brahma's Nature into male and female-it's the same story.

It seems, neither the man nor the woman took kindly to this separation. Ever since they are restlessly yearning for a reunion to be a "composite" (integrated) whole. This mystic longing for togetherness is love-always tugging at the hearts of man and woman.

Both swear by love, and are so much taken in that they have fallen in love with love. It is the deepest ever emotion that churns man and woman. To deny it is to deny being alive. It is a beacon sublime to caution man and guide him on to self-fulfilment.

Whether God inspired man or man rose spiritually that high, the fact remains that in marriage the two separated one-time-partners come together as life-partners. Together they hope for, dream of, and aspire to become one whole once again.

How and when man realized the truth of marriage, I cannot say. From a mere instinct to a knowable-will is a far cry. When the ancient man could will it he made it a part of his religion. Not long after he realized that he had chanced upon a miracle of love and faith. It exalted him to a personage that was better placed in many ways.

The deities have come and gone. Even faiths and human values metaphorsed. Social customs also are in for change and did change from people to people. But the institution of marriage stays. It stands. Man and woman marry to found a family-the family is a natural unit of humankind.

Men have been foolish enough to wage wars to destroy one another's faith. But they have never tried to undo the institution of marriage. It is as sacred and binding today as ever before. OM!

Jealousy destroys the harmony that it seeks to safeguard.

6. WHAT MAKES IDEAL MARRIAGE

OM! It is high time I talked of what makes an ideal marriage.

God-realization, self-realization-there should also be such a thing like marriage-realization.

Man should truly love his wife and the woman should have shraddha (श्रद्धा) for her husband. Shraddha? Self- esteem, confidence, love, care and faith in the basic goodness of humankind are its constituents. This way it is not just a female's instinctive run for a runaway male, nor it is a frolicsome gambol of a male to woo and win over the female. It is a meaningful quest for the truth of marriage-realization.

Marital romance is not skin deep-it is the very nature of man's being. It springs from the depths of the human spirit. In it a man and a woman do not share a mere lodging, but they share all that they are.

What is it exactly that life seeks to realize in bringing man and woman together? Apparently life wants to go beyond mere survival on to the prevalence of humankind. That is why life after marriage is a different affair altogether.

In so vital a matter, religion could not possibly stand aloof, so it promptly stepped into this area of human activity. Here is the vedic mantra that a bride and the bridegroom recite at the time of marriage:

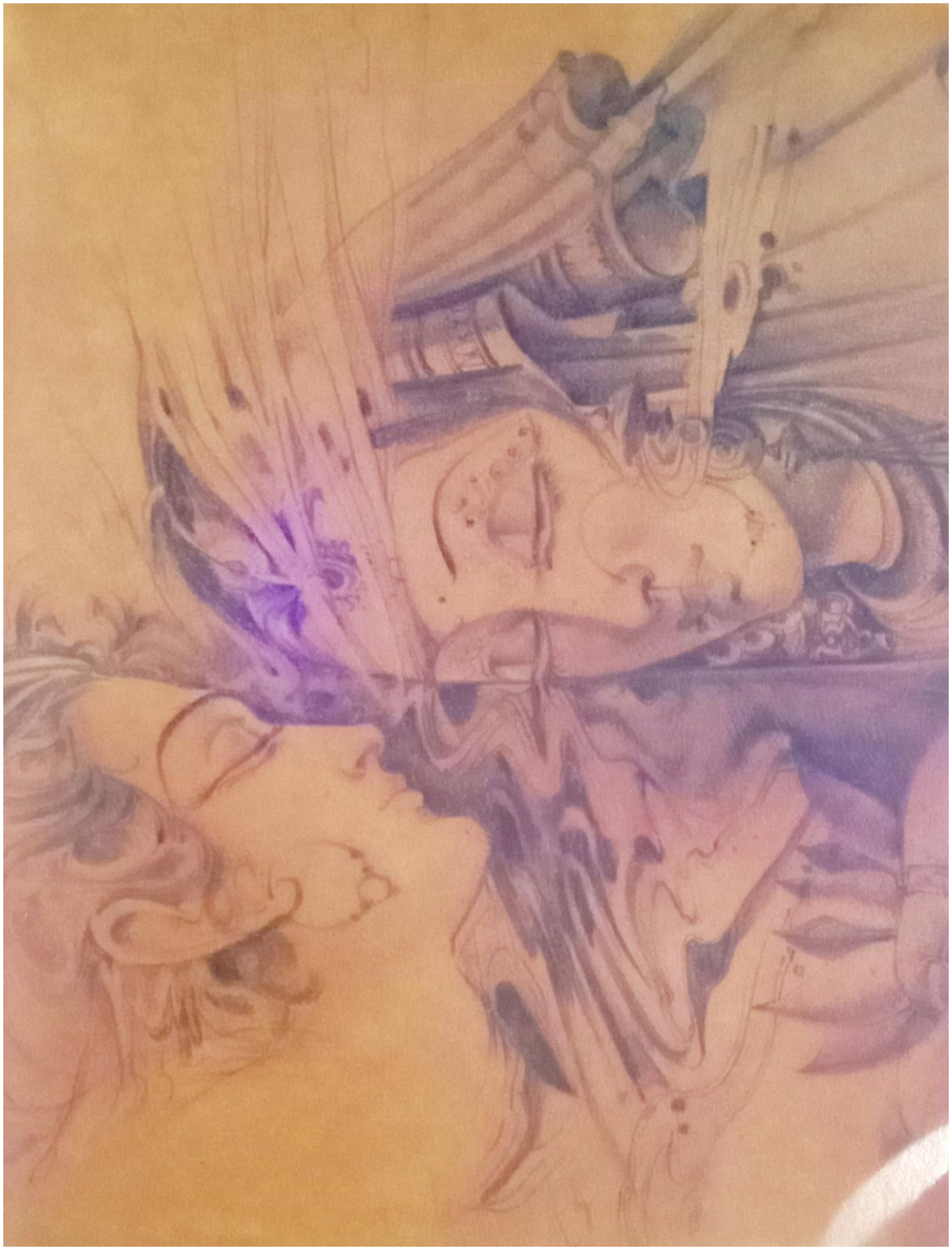
ॐ समञ्जन्तु विश्वे देवाः समापो हृदयानि नौ।

सं मातरिश्वा सं धाता समुदेष्ट्री दधातु नौ॥

(R.V.X. 85, 47)

In this mantra both man and woman invoke the Lord of Creation to unite their hearts and minds. They resolve to live together in harmonious unison, on their way to marriage-realization and self-fulfilment.

In another vedic mantra both the bride and the bridegroom say: "In all solemnity, let us commend ourselves to the Lord of Creation. May He unite us in lasting togetherness. May our words find a favourable response in each other's heart."



In marriage the unity of the heart and the soul is imperative. The unity envisaged is as we join together (नियुनक्तु) two wooden planks. That way both man and wife can maintain their identity and still remain integrally united. (Please do not think of identity in terms of individuality.)

Man and woman! You are male and female. The heaven that you lost as Adam and Eve will be yours once again if you earnestly fulfill the marriage vows. Live creditably as man and wife and be devoted to each other. Not to strive for marriage-realization is an act of sacrilege-sinning against life itself and a sheer waste of a rare human heritage-love. OM!

7. MARRIED LOVE ABHORS BETRAYAL

OM! When married, do not ever rub love the wrong way. Both man and wife should care and be frank. Frankness is the first casualty in a world of suspicion. An unfounded suspicion leads to tension and man and wife adopt an irrational attitude. They argue for argument's sake and oppose each other for opposition's sake.

The married-love abhors betrayal. It demands implicit loyalty and faith. The hearts of man and wife readily mirror each other's doings. What takes place in one is reflected in the other-sometimes as a premonition. Life and nature seek in and demand of man and wife a strong sense of fidelity. The marriage vows cannot be betrayed with impunity. The betrayal hurts. No wonder everybody condemns when man sinks to such depths.

Immorality is against the law of nature and that of life. Man's good sense revolts against it. I am no alarmist, nor is my mind obsessed with the idea of sin. It forebodes evil.

The immorality (unchastity) is violence directed against 'man' and 'nature'. Violence begets violence. The consequences are naturally catastrophic-affecting man's very being. Even seemingly innocent flirtations and the socalled platonic* love sometimes disturb the marital accord and calm.

Adultery in any form and at any level introduces a poison in the body politic of right conduct and its principles. Even craving hurts normal healthy living. Perversion adversely affects the mind and man suffers because of it. OM!

8. BUT HUMAN TO ERR

OM! Young man! You err. Young lady! You are not an angel either. Both of you are likely to err. Not much wrong done, however. For it is seldom really meant. You are man and wife, hence dear to each other. Do notice each other's mistakes, faults also. That in.... interest-hence love.

You err. After all you are a human being. To err is human. To forgive is divine. Is that expecting too much? All right, then to punish is law. Punish by all means. But when your own turn comes, be a sport and take the punishment gracefully.

No harm in making small stupid mistakes, sometimes for the fun of it. Be true to each other that is what truly matters. Welcome righteousness, but shun self-righteousness and be a couple of true human beings. OM!

9. WHEN LOVE GOES WRONG

OM! No man shall ever be loved by his wife if he himself does not love her truly. She may respect, be faithfully devoted to him but love? He will have to go without it.

* In reality platonic love is an intimate relationship between a man and a woman that is characterised by the absence of sexual involvement.

The wife herself is often helpless. For the woman in her feels hurt and puts a damper on the fire of love. In spite of herself, she lacks the warmth of love.

Alas! Because of a lapse on man's part, his wife becomes indifferent. It's the beginning of a vicious circle, hard to break. Because of her unconcern, man loves her not as before. That in its turn makes her indifferent all the more.

Any lapse on the part of the wife also disturbs, hurts. If her heart lies elsewhere, she will fail to respond fully to his love. Man gets upset and is irritated. When love goes wrong nothing ever goes right. Marriage loses its charm. Life becomes dull.

Man and wife should be true to each other and keep up, rather exalt, the sanctity of the marriage vows*. Marry and stay married and strive for marriage-realization.

Broken marriage means a broken "institution". That results in many a problem, juvenile in particular. The children suffer the most because of the very plank on which they stand having been taken away from underneath their feet. Human dignity suffers an irreparable loss.

To keep the world safe for posterity, a child of today and an adult of tomorrow must have his or her roots in the family. A happy marriage and a happy family go together. Man should love his wife and the woman should heartily respond with love on their way to marriage-realization.

Last! There is not much of the woman about her if she cannot bear a child and bring him or her up to be a worthy personage. And there is not much of the man about him if he is not his own man-considerate, bold, honest and hearty. OM!

*The vows are the basics of marriage. "There has to be fuel before the fire will burn." Fuel? In the case of marriage the marriage vows and love form the needed fuel.

10. A WORD WITH A YOUNG MAN

OM! Young Man! Some words for you!

Wonder if you shall ever discover your true bearings. You have too many irons in the fire. Yours is much too hard a lot. It's good, however, that courage and faith were ordained for you.

Hardships and hazards? They are an integral part of your life and you know it. For, the children are yet to come into their own and the old are too weak to meet the challenge. Accept the challenge and respond manfully. Experience will add new dimensions to your everyday life. Never allow the difficult times to make you callous, uncaring for the feelings of others. Take care lest the beast-lurking somewhere in your heart-should pounce upon and maul the man in you. That will be a human tragedy and your loss too.

You are not just an individual. You are an integral part of the family. The family is rooted down in the environment- natural, cultural and traditional-In its turn the phenomenon of environment is blessed with a purposeful sense of direction and meaning. By the time you are ready to found a family, a woman is likely to meet you more than halfway.

After marriage, some adjustments might become necessary-clipping, paring, pruning, sort of triming off. By and by things shall however, settle down. For a woman love, marriage and the home are in and on principle, a wholetime occupation. That makes it a little difficult for you to fully live up to her expectations. To make marriage a success, it will be better if you start dreaming a little to be in the likeness of her heartthrob. Later, for better understanding, along with her strive to discover new horizons of marriage, love and life.

Find new areas of agreement and readily adjust or re- adjust as the need be. Usually the quarrels arise out of petty differences. Even if there be a clash of personalities, handle the situation with care. Greater understanding, mutual regard, and a spirit of give and take do help.

It is not possible to sing lyrics of love all one's life (though room enough for the duets). Hence the two together should realise the responsibilities of a married life-the sooner the better.

Always seeking a flaming joy in love is sure to wreck the chances of an early adjustment. Normally it is difficult to feel the same way at one and the same time. To play a second fiddle seldom finds favour. The love that poets write lilting lyrics about, is to most of us a paradise lost-that is why everybody loves to read a love story.

Young man! With a happy heart take the marriage, home and your job in your stride. Most of the people do that. Why bother about a few who scrape through life somehow?

No running away, live life fully and not in parts. Its debt cannot be paid back in instalments. Do not limp through life listlessly. Nor become a recluse-mentally or otherwise. No fun in becoming your own jailor either. That way you miss a lot in life which is hard to catch up with later. It makes you a faddist and may even give you a sadistic bent of mind. Even pessimism sets in and you start finding the brightest day dark. Alas! Life cannot be re-lived-not even in imagination.

Friend! Love life to live it well. Allow no doubts to dampen your love for it. Sustain love even when hit hard by many an adverse circumstance.

Sometimes you might err-even blunder. Sometimes you could be right also. Be a sport and take it all as part of the game. No unnecessary regrets-however making amends is desirable.

Young man! You are young as yet. While questing for the undefined, undetermined frontiers of the values of life, you might make mistakes and come to grief. Let nothing obsess you, however. Face the situation with fortitude and aspire to make a right decision next time.

It is better not to run down samaj (**समाज**, community, society). You are a social being answerable not only to yourself but to your fellow beings also. Even when the interference is not to your liking, do appreciate the society's role in life as a human value.

Friend! You are young and keen on an adventure of the heart. The society is not ever against love. It is however, against a mere fling-or an irresponsible indulgence. It guarantees you the right to love, marry and found a family. There have been but a few

isolated cases of love-tragedies. The love tragedies do excite as well as delight. But a vast majority of people are happily married and in love!

Society thinks in terms of collective gain-yours and that of the other members of the community at large. It is the ancient Sarvodaya ideal.

Society's duty it is to protect the innocent against the wily and the unscrupulous. An immature young girl or a young boy are like growing creepers needing support*. Like a good gardener trying to find a suitable support for the creepers, the society is anxious to see them-the girl or the boy- leaning against a proper shoulder. The shoulder should be that of a mature, responsible person-neither a coward nor a shirker.

The society can make mistakes. But you also often err. The society is in a better position to right the wrong done. Better take advantage of the society's abundant fund of common sense, care and wisdom. That's all.

What is samaj after all? It's you, it's me, it's a corporation of human beings with common problems and common interests. For a better yield the farmer divides his land into separate fields. For the healthy growth, God does that in the case of humanity. (Man has a destiny to fulfil.) An individual is the unit. Then comes the family-father, mother and their children. The next bigger unit is society- the Samaj. It consists of families having common interests to watch and common problems to handle. Last of all is the brotherhood of man-the Family of Man.

• This need for support is so very intense that young people mistake it for love. In fact, it is just the human support that they seek from each other to cope with the urgent demands made on them by the expanding frontiers of their emotions.

Maybe before taking us on to Infinity, God makes us progress step by step. Hence let us live as He wills.

I could go on but I prefer to leave it to your robust good sense. You are a human being and an heir-apparent to God- head. That adds to your responsibility. May God bless you!

I expect you to ponder over all that I have said in a cool, quiet and responsible manner. I may be wrong but one thing that I am sure about is that in every responsibility that you take upon yourself is inherent a strength that will help you to meet its challenge. God is Great. OM!

11. A WORD WITH A YOUNG WOMAN

OM! Behold a young woman standing on the threshold of rediscovering herself. She is youthful and warm. The child in her is wistfully looking on at her dying world of dolls. The childlike impetuosity annoys the woman inside, who is getting impatient to step on to the stage set for the heyday of youth. The mother in her is counselling patience and is carefully grooming her for the blissfully purposive days ahead.

Here! She is all playfulness and is full of zest for life. On the sly she nourishes a fond hope that a life of reckless abandon, love and romance is on its way. At the very thought of it, a strange excitement sweeps her off her feet and she romps about joyfully.

Her boisterous heart is ready to unfold a whole world of romance, love and dreams. Look! How her eyes sparkle, scintillate and flash to light up the paths of her playful longings! Her lips part readily into a maidenly smile and she is all flaming charm. A spring tide of rosy desires makes her face aglow with its telltale warmth.

Disturb her not in her girlish reveries, frivolous though. Hush! Her youthfulness is playing pranks-while she is busy adorning her youthful surprises and young 'day-dreams. Oh! She blushes hot to glimpse the forbidden desires being mirrored unabashed in the throbbings of her young heart. She is going about coyly lest somebody should discover her adolescent dreams. Her voice is soft and laden with sweetness of the budding fondness and love. Excited and astir, time and again she crosses and recrosses the threshold of her maidenly bashfulness to be near her newfound love. Emboldened by the thoughtful woman inside, she is enshrining her love-dreams in her youthful heart. She is already feeling being caressed by the voluptuous days ahead and is fondly dressing up her sensuality.

She has chanced upon a treasure trove and knows not to whom it belongs. Harried by a sense of guilt, time and again she retreats within to hide her pleasurable dreams and forbidden desires. Nothing can be done however about it unless somebody comes to claim her chance find. How can she just scatter it to the winds? Her timorous heart trembles and she shakes with excitement at the slightest hint of an approaching manly footfall.

A word of caution, dear young woman. The world outside is often callous, so cruel. Not all the people but some of them are bad. Nature is also not fair to you. It takes two to commit an indiscretion, but you carry the unwholesome burden. To a large extent, it is still a man's world.

Think of love in terms of a good home and comfortable living. Don't be carried away by honied words. You need a teacher to solve a mathematical problem. How can you, all by yourself, handle the problem of marriage? Do be guided by your heart, but let the mature adult experience of friends, relations and parents also play its part.

Lest your heartthrob should take offence, normally you ask only palatable questions. Remember the saying? A person can fool some of the people for some time, but not all people for all time. By making proper enquiries, let your friends and parents save you from being successfully fooled for some time. At stake is your future happiness. Then they are as much concerned about it as you are.

Too clever to be cheated? Still someone might take advantage; hence better seek advice. Keep away from those who take a woman to be an object of sex only. Take your time to exercise your option. Marriage means making a happy home and founding a family. Is your choicest man adequately capable of that? Has he a strong sense of responsibility? A wrong decision might land you and your family into trouble.

How about an arranged marriage? It has its own advantage and charm too. If love is an article of faith with you, fall in love with the man you marry. Do have a say in the matter, but let it preferably be a family decision. There is no such thing as "made for each other". That is an ad man's sales talk. You are not for sale. Are you?

Why don't you come out with whatever challenges attention? You must have some goal in view. Being young, it is your privilege to cherish some ideal. In that you have the making of a great person. Hence take care and be wiser.

Do people make fun of your views and your aspirations? Air them not the less for that reason. Heed your own conscience and not the clamour of the heedless crowd. Numbers do not necessarily mean the truth is on their side.

You are young as yet-not sure of your right place in life. You might wrongly adjudge an action of yours to be a sin. Take heart lest a false sense of guilt-consciousness should create a psychopathic problem. A student of human psychology knows better and can take care of many such problems.

Dear young girl of today, a wife of tomorrow and a mother in the years to come! An adolescent girl is like a growing creeper. As it grows, the creeper creeps along and climbs a thorny bush even-whichever happens to be nearer. Like a responsible gardener finding

a suitable support, your parents and friends should see to it that you lean essentially against a man of character. He should neither be a shirker, nor unscrupulous-but a man with a strong sense of responsibility.

Not that the society or your parents cannot make a mistake, but you are also likely to err. With your limited resources, you have little chance to right the wrong done. But the society is better placed to solve the problem. Seek assistance.

Good! So you are a married woman now. Fine. Here I am again, come to say a word of advice to you.

Comfort your man when he suffers a setback. An "I told you so" after the event only irritates. Try to understand and respect his point of view. Encourage him lest he should lose faith in himself. Do not hurt, nor insult. Comfort with love.

Now your place of honour is primarily your home. Grace is what a happy marriage should bring in its wake. Not frivolous but be gracefully dignified. Petty jealousies, idle bickerings forebode evil. Never stand on a false sense of prestige. Be frank and forgiving. Stoop to conquer and conquer to love and to be loved.

By virtue of your love for your man, you can change his outlook on life. Inspire him to nobility of character, dignified behaviour, and a kindly grace. Don't send him to work flurried. He will come back home worse. Nothing sobers man more than tender care and love.

Your greatest triumph lies in womanly grace and the emergence of motherhood. A woman at her feminine best is a great lover. At her divine best, she is maa, the mother. Neither costly ornaments nor the exclusive clothes but a graceful behaviour makes you look really beautiful. Look down upon men and women of easy virtue. They are slaves of passion, ready to barter their selves for selfish gains.

Achieve greatness in your own sphere. That is the best way to explode the myth that women are not equal to men in stature. In life man and woman complement each other In the battle of sexes, neither man nor woman can ever win a decisive war. They have to find a way to live amicably for the good of all the humankind. By becoming man and wife, both of you embark upon a great venture of the human spirit. Not just a mutual arrangement to live together for sex, the marriage is a sublime get-together of two human

beings in search of their true identity. Thus united, strive severally and jointly for marital bliss and self-fulfilment.

You are a person, in your own right a human being. Grow to your fully dignified human stature-intellectual, moral and spiritual. No hope for a world wherein the better half of its population is not allowed to live an honourable life.

Last! Have full faith in the sublimity of a spiritually elevated life and transcend the mere biological existence. Humanize all the drives and the urges. OM!

Paradise may or may not exist but the longing for it has its own advantages. Man becomes conscious of the Human Destiny and feels great.

12. WHAT WIFE RESENTS THE MOST

OM! A word of advice to you, young lady. Unknown to you even, something in you resents anyone having a greater hold on your husband. The woman in you takes it as a challenge to her love for him. It is this subtle annoyance that disturbs otherwise quite cordial relations between you and your husband's relations.

Basically man is a rational animal. Being human you too should be rational. Be reasonable and let good sense prevail. Because of minor reverses that your love might suffer, you should not get upset. Man's world is a lot larger than that of a woman. To keep you, your home, your children and his love for you safe, he has to fight a lone battle most of the time. Give him a free hand and grudge it not. Be contented to have one hand of his around your waist with love. With the other let him work for a living unhampered.

Enough of hectic activities and emotional churning all day long, at home he wants peace-not that of the mind alone but that of the heart too. The world outside is not always kindly disposed but is out to grab whatever he has.

People want to give the minimum of themselves and are eager to get the maximum out of others. Such is the world he lives in and works for. An adverse reaction is inevitable because he is human.

Comfort him when he suffers a setback. An "I told you so after the event will only irritate. Try to understand his predicament. Accommodate, encourage and help him build up his self-confidence.

Your place of honour is primarily your home. Even when you have to go to work, you do it to keep up its dignity, its calm, its grace.

Be dignified in life as well as at home. Do not be frivolous, nor indulge in idle gossip. Petty jealousies, idle bickerings forebode evil. Never stand on a false sense of prestige. Be frank, considerate and forgiving. Stoop to conquer and conquer to love and to be loved. Speak soft and sweet. Shouting is unwomanlike. It annoys more than what causes it.

Change for the better your man's outlook on life. Send him out every day a chastened personage. Inspire him to nobility of character and manly grace for the well-being of the human race. You can do it.

Your greatest triumph lies in womanly grace and the emergence of the sacred motherhood. Your charm lies in graceful living and exalted human behaviour. Look down upon men and women of easy virtue. They barter their sublime love for material gain.

Come on, dear young lady-you are great in your own sphere. Man has his own field to work in and live for. Just as a carpenter joins two planks to have a plank of larger dimensions-you and your husband should coordinate your activities to cover more and more areas for the good of man.

By becoming man and wife, both of you embark upon a great venture of the spirit. Not just a mutual arrangement to live together for sex, marriage is a sublime get-together of two human souls in search of their identity.

Thus united strive severally and jointly for marital bliss and self-fulfilment. OM!

To care for and to love your man is definitely not slaving for him. To think that way is to suffer from an inferiority complex. Rise to full womanly stature to the wonder of all. A happy home is worth working for and aspiring after!

13. WONDER IF YOU KNOW

OM! Dear Sir! Wonder if you care to know your own mind. So often you are what your wrought-up nerves make you. You are seldom yourself and are rarely at home. Enough of hectic excitement that is there in the world around. When at home, you want comfort

and peace-not only of the mind but that of the heart too. While at work you had had enough of emotional churning all day long.

Man's world outside is not kindly-disposed and is out to grab whatever it can. You couldn't expect anything better in a world wherein people more often than not want to give the minimum of themselves and are eager to get the maximum out of others. Such is the world you live in and work for, all your life. Howsoever much you may harden your heart, there is bound to be a reaction. You are human and not a mere robot.

At home, you wish to get what is denied to you outside. Outside, nobody cares what you are unless it suits somebody's convenience. As a result thereof-at home you expect to be looked up to as someone who matters.

Whatever you get outside has a price. Do no favour and you get no favour. A help is not help coming from a fellow being to another. Instead what you get is charity, at best a grant. Whenever in distress, you get neither love nor sympathy but pity. It is a charitable deed done for an unfortunate person. And for this "noble action" a bill is presented to the Lord for immediate or deferred payment.

At home, you want no bargaining of any sort, nor arguments. You give in love and you expect to be appreciated. Distrust irritates. Sometimes, you follow the line of least resistance-you tell untruths and are driven to hypocrisy. Apparently, you take it as a challenge to your manliness. Things pile up and you start losing your temper even at small things. At the back of your mind is some long- forgotton mishap. It surfaces to give you the cause for giving vent to your strong feelings.

In the factory, on the roadside, or in office, you toil at the job awfully long. Bruised badly by the brutality of one authority or another-you trudge back home for merciful relaxation.

On reaching where you live, you expect a smiling "welcome home". You desperately need an understanding companionship that should soothe and rehabilitate you both physically and mentally.

I leave it at that-And I leave it to you and whosoever happens to be your life-companion, to make the lodging place a home and a haven-if not the heaven that it aught to be.

I concede that you need be buoyed up! But you must also know that things are not more important than people! OM!

"What a noble person demands in himself, the lesser man demands it in others."

14. A WORD ABOUT MARRIAGE

OM! Aspirant! In the field of this human relationship, you are entirely on your own. Nature doesn't help you much in any aspect of it. What is right and what is wrong, normally it's for you to decide.

Let experience, common sense, social customs, religion, and above all faith guide your footsteps on to a happy married life.

Yours is not a mere biological existence. You are no longer guided by the instincts alone. You have a quite well developed will. You can will to do things as you like. Not difficult for you to defy the instincts even. And you need not always behave in a certain manner under similar circumstances. It's so because you are human and have the freedom of choice.

Being human, you can always rise above-transcend even- -the demands of life on the biological as well on the human level. You can refuse to eat though hungry. It's also true in all other spheres of life, sex included. Leading voluntarily a life of celibacy is a normal human behaviour. There is nothing abnormal or unnatural about it.

You are human. You can initiate, create and develop a new way of life and behaviour to better your chance for self- fulfilment. (Of course, it can be the other way, too. Let us not talk of human degradation, however.)

Marriage is one such human value that was initiated long long ago. It is a humanly dignified behaviour and an exalted way of life. It's as old as man. Ancient man was as much aware of it as the man of today.

One man, one woman, 'till death do us part' is a higher human value. Sometime in the hoary past, it was initiated in the best interests of mankind-especially the women. It conforms to the highest socialistic pattern of society.

Once a man and woman decide to live together as husband and wife, it's in the fitness of things thereafter that they should settle down to marry. Now that they had had their choice and chance they should let others alone. (It was because of this higher sense of justice and fair play that at one time the Hindu society looked down upon a widow trying to remarry. Divorce is a comparatively recent development.)

To continue: Marriage is a human value. As such, it is a human problem as all the human values are. To live up to this human value is a virtue sublime. It sanctifies this man- and-woman relationship. Failure in this respect makes this get-together adultry. Adultry is against the human spirit. Anything running counter to the human spirit is a sin. It is to decry moral values of life and to debase human dignity. Adultry jeopardizes man's best interests-physical, mental, moral and spiritual. As such it has always stood condemned. At no time in the history of the world has it ever been condoned-morally or otherwise. It hurts.

So, marriage is a human problem. No human problem can ever be isolated. Life is one integrated whole. Its implications have got to be looked into specifically on the human level. What's the best way to solve it anyway? Unshakable faith in the sanctity of marriage alone can help. Everything else just tinkers with it. Integrity of the persons involved also helps.

Parting company is easy. Refusing to live together is not difficult either. Seeking divorce is no remedy however. Nor does it enhance the stature of man of the space-age.

Marriage is a challenge to human dignity-it ever was and shall ever be. Be human enough to accept that man does falter. And be godlike to believe that he can also act right. Now start afresh!

Every day you spend ten to twelve hours to earn your living. Can't you spend a few hours to earn your marital accord and bliss? In married life you face the challenge of sex-behaviour. Don't take it for granted. Give due thought to it. Instead of seeking divorce from each other, better attend to the present day malady-hurry, scurry, stress and strain. Don't let the rules and regulations of any sort play havoc with marriage. Be alive to your responsibility. At stake is the future of humankind. What to do?

Man should follow religion. It aspires to cover life in its entirety-man's mental, moral, social and spiritual behaviour. It not only controls but also guides and helps.

In order to be true to life the religion has got to grow in purpose and meaning. For life is a growing process. This condition is best fulfilled if a religion is a progressive way of life and not some dogmatic creed. It should always be alive to the need of the times-nay the need of the hour.

Aspirant! For greater understanding and enduring companionship, sublimate-humanize-all your inordinate desires and intemperate passions that keep you tensed and on edge. Transcend the mere biological existence and invest your life with finer human sentiments. Be essentially human, necessarily a man of character and unfailingly God-fearing. Life will then be more rewarding and love more gratifying ready to send out into the world outstanding persons and distinguished personages. OM!

Inspired by the spirit of the age, strive to win the battles of life. Success or failure is in the womb of Time. You are but to say good bye to your baser self and endeavour meaningfully.

15. A WORD ABOUT SUBLIMATION

As a psychological term, "sublimation" is to restrain, then redirect the available instinctive energy (of an urge to be sublimated) into a channel other than the natural one-provided that it becomes socially acceptable and valuable too. It is both a conscious and an unconscious process and must be distinguished from suppression and repression. In a way it is to transcend an instinctive urge-it is to humanize it.

OM! Young man! All talk about controlling a natural urge or getting rid of it altogether is meaningless. An urge is not something extraneous; it is an integral part of man's being.

Man can control an inordinate desire by bringing himself into a reasonable frame of mind, but he cannot control the urge wherefrom that desire arises. He better control himself for that matter.

Anyway, the only way to control an urge is to sublimate it by humanizing its drive. A sublimated desire emanating from a humanized urge will essentially be human-unanimal-like. It will fire man with a spirit of service, love, sacrifice and helpful companionship.

Then, the physical gratification of a sensual desire does not truly satisfy. It remains unsatisfied. The hunger for gratification bristles all the more. This is what exhausts man mentally-physically also-and leaves him tensed and on edge.

However, sublimation of a natural urge is truly satisfying. Fulfilment of a desire arising from a sublimated drive gratifies and leaves man delighted.

Again-the gratification of a sensual desire is like plucking an as-yet-not-ripe fruit. It hurts the tree. Sublimation, however, is like a ripe fruit falling off-the tree feels a great relief at its "loss". Its urge to prevail finds its fulfilment in the seed that the ripened fruit yields. Like everything else, the tree has a purpose to fulfil.

That is how I feel about gratification of a desire and its sublimation. Here I may add, the sublimation is also gratification but with a difference. Truly sublimated desire stimulates and gives a poise to man's life and he becomes sweet and sacrificing-truly human and humane.

Seeker! Take a cue from this and live naturally: no suppression beyond healthy limit. Do try to transcend the desires that bristle and make you restless. Sublimate them by humanizing the drives which set them out. Be properly guided in it, however.

How to differentiate between sublimation and suppression? Suppression; when a natural urge is suppressed too much for too long a time, it can have an adverse effect on man and his behaviour. He becomes selfish, grabbing, and easily irritable. He does not see reason and is full of hatred. He bristles with brute force and takes pleasure in hurting others. That makes man crude and uncharitable-dehumanized.

An urge when sublimated sparks an edifying revolution in man's life. Life becomes noble and dedicated. He feels inspired to work selflessly for the good of all. His everyday life becomes socially more useful. To be able to serve others does not fall to everybody's lot. Only the lucky chosen few get the auspicious chance.

Selfless service rouses man spiritually and his behaviour becomes exalted.

Aspirant! Isn't the need for sublimating desires desirable?

OM!

Sublimation is to confront, then humanize the brutality of man's inordinate desires-anger, violence, greed, ruthless ambition, intemperate sex-desire, etc.

16. HUMAN POISE-A WAY OF LIFE

OM! Dear young man! Do you want your wife to be a pleasant companion, a good home-maker, an understanding mother to your child and a loving wife as well? Help her sublimate the sex-drive. Rest assured, that won't make her cold, nor deprive her of her

sex-appeal. On the other hand, it will make her an ideal woman-truly feminine. She will become an exalted personage-to love and to cherish.

As things are; man wants to keep his wife constantly tensed up and all afire with sex-drive and still expects her to be calm, cool, and understanding. What a fallacy! He expects her to accomplish an impossible task.

Sir, it's not possible to have one's proverbial cake and eat it, too. Once the passions are aroused, it is not easy to behave normally. Don't expect your wife to be super-human. If kept on edge, taut and tensed up, she will become possessive, jealous, intolerant, even short-tempered. She can't help it, because she is human. Don't blame her for being unreasonable. When her passions are aroused inordinately,. she does want to have her way, and expects you to behave as she desires. Under the circumstances, trouble at home is inevitable. Quarrels will arise and there might be violence too.

Young man! Neither resent nor lose temper. Take it easy. Please try to understand the predicament she is in. Normally, a young woman is either dominated by the motherly instinct or she is carried away by the sex-urge. But she is a person as well-besides being "just a woman'- mother to some and an object of sex to the perverts.

That she is a person is usually not taken note of. That's what makes woman an enigma to man, while she is a person like any other. She is at her best when the three aspects of her personality are evenly balanced in her. Let me call this aspect of her life as the human poise.

To flower into true womanhood, she must achieve this human poise. She must strive to become a good wife, a kindly mother and an exalted personage-worthy of praise and reverence. That is what human poise is, in her case. It's a higher human value.

That is what makes her a paragon of virtuous womanhood-the woman in her rises to a higher moral and spiritual stature.

Dear sir! Not that you should not-you should also strive to be a good husband, a good father and a noble person. That is what the human poise is in your case. It's a higher value of life.

That is what makes you manly-not in terms of sex but in terms of the sublimity of character.

In married life the human poise described above is essential-both for man and woman.

Aim high. Aspire to have the human poise. That is the way to achieve the unalloyed marital bliss-worth aspiring after..... Live the yoga way and herald the human poise. OM!

Be God-fearing and you will act essentially right. You will be truly human and your life will be full of finer human sentiments.

17. THE FAMILY OF MAN

OM! Dear adults! Do you mind if I talk to you for a while?

May I ask: "Does your responsibility end when your child is grown up? Or does it grow as your child grows?"

It's all right for a bird and its mate to drive their chicks out of the nest, once they grow wings and can fly. The bird itself deserts the nest and forgets about it till the next mating season. Next time, a new nest and a new mate!

You are human. In you, the mating instinct has grown into conjugal love and love of the family-it is not seasonal, is for lifetime. Yours is a home and not a mere bird's nest. Deep sentiments sublime are attached to it.

Your child might grow financial wings-be financially independent-but the child is still in need of you, your care and mature guidance. If the child happens to be a girl, your responsibility as a parent is greater. She needs you and your care a lot more.

As your daughter grows, grow with her; keep abreast of the times she lives in. Times were different when you were young. Know the trend, moral climate, and the general tendencies of the modern times. Don't sit back sulking, all the time grumbling, and not trying to understand. Keep yourself well informed.

Despite maturity and age, you still err and are often betrayed by your passions. How can you expect your young child not to falter? In him or her the rising passions are yet to discover sanity, sobriety and moderation. Be gracefully patient. Help your child to have well-balanced views on and about life-sex included.

Exercise your parental authority not in self-interest but for the child's well-being. Please let the child do what the occasion demands and is right. It is not being tied down to your

children or their being tied to your apron-strings. It's enduring jointly the rigours of a growing life. It's making their mental, moral and spiritual growth a family affair.

Be it the dispersal of the seed, the mating instinct or an urge for love-it's for founding a family. Founding a family is human. To a large extent it is imperative.

In man this value of life attains a human stature. Its potential is great. It will grow into man's love for man and all the living beings. Ultimately it finds fulfilment in love of God-the Creator of all that is.

By breaking up a home and weakening its family front, man opens the proverbial Pandora's Box of human problems. Crisis is bound to develop-hard for man to meet its challenge. Feeling of insecurity will prevail and its fear will end in disaster.

Dear parents! Help humankind. Let your sons and daughters have their roots in the family-not shifting but deep and enduring. That is the only way to save the world from wanton destruction.

And now to you little great man and the small great woman a word or two-not of advice but that of caution.

Think of love in terms of a good home that shall provide not only comfortable shelter but a good living too. Don't be carried away by empty, though honied, words. You need a teacher to solve a mathematical problem. How can you solve this human problem-the marriage-all by yourself? Be guided by your heart by all means, but let the family also help you to decide. Remember the saying-a person can fool some of the people for some time but not all the people for all times. Let the family make discreet enquiries to save you from being successfully fooled for some time. Even if ninety- nine out of a hundred are happily married, to you only your own happiness matters.

None can ever be too clever to be cheated or made a fool of. Someone might somehow take advantage of you. Do not feel shy, nor hesitate to seek advice.

An arranged marriage? It has its own strong points in its favour provided all concerned are deeply rooted in the family. Of course, the value of your say in the matter should essentially be of sound integrity.

That was long long ago still.... one day, while out for a morning walk, I saw a sickly woman on her way to a temple nearby. Close on her heels trudged her daughter. Though herself small, she carried in her arms her infant brother.

Of a sudden the little girl slipped and fell down. Before I could make the distance, she was on her feet again. Her brother, though frightened, was not hurt a bit.

Snatching the baby from her loving arms, the screaming woman started beating the brave little girl. The poor child, a woman in the making, took the beating calmly. And without so much as a single word of protest, wearily she walked along with her brother again in her arms.

There on that Delhi footpath, I sat sad and in tears. Face turned heavenward, I implored: "O, Kindly Lord! In this world of Thine shall a small helpless child ever get a better chance?"

Alas! Neither Providence nor the Compassionate One uttered a single word..... I waited then. I await even today..... OM!

18. LETTERS

Dear Y....

The problem of today's world is to deal with the brutality of man's inordinate impulses-violence, anger, avarice, lust, vanity etc. Today science is doing useful work in this field by studying causes and finding out ways to combat it. It is a welcome sign to see the scientist walk into an area which was formerly a religionist's preserve. Now man's involvement in his own affairs will be greater and more practical.

As the things are man's world is changing fast. To keep pace with the changing times is becoming rather difficult. Man is becoming uncivilized despite his best efforts.

Violence is in the very air we breathe. Religion has lost its appeal. The Promised Land and the so-called hell count no more. Man is no longer prepared to look forward to an uncertain tomorrow.

Values-individual, social, and spiritual-are in a state of flux. Flouting of authority is becoming a way of life and has already started descending into violent storms of inordinate passions. The greatest tragedy is the weakening of authority at home. May God help the man if home loses its grace. Save home to save mankind from violent

disasters-moral, social, spiritual and political. The situation demands immediate attention.

Violence, sparked by one inordinate desire or another, has always been there. Human nature remains basically the same. Humanized urges inspire men to take to noble deeds. Their inordinate desires end in violence-despite saner self counselling otherwise. It has become the fashion of the day to blame upbringing and the social environments-governments even. The result is that the individual-the real culprit-goes scot free. Catch him. He cannot escape his responsibility for his lapses and moral laxity.

It is no use blaming technology for the ills of the world. Despite its shortcomings it is necessary for man's well being. He is neither entirely a product of circumstances, nor of the environments. He has his roots in the family.

To the family restore its authority, sanctity and the social, moral and spiritual health-and you will have the right persons at the helm of the world affairs.

Sincerely

NATH

Dear Nathji,

You asked, in your last letter, about what is worrying me now. You are right, of course; I am troubled--about myself, my relation to my family, and my life. It is not, I think, unjust to assert that I have been inadequate as a husband and father. I have tended to regard my wife and children as extensions of myself, to be taken for granted and noticed only when they inconvenience me. My inclination has always been to go my own way and let others do the same- but this does not work in relation to those for whom one has a basic responsibility to foster and assist in their growth and development. My evasion of this responsibility is, in large part, at the root of my wife's unhappiness and the problems in our relationship.

If I were concentrating all my energies on some goal to which I was wholly committed, neglect of my responsibilities to my family as persons would be more understandable. At present, however, I am expending my energies in the routine activities of my work, activities which, while worthwhile, are not fundamentally important to myself or others. I am still too fearful, unable to let go, of the things and activities which provide a kind of material security for my life. I become involved in these things to the neglect of my

real responsibilities to others and to my own development. I am afraid to let go of what I do have in order to grow. And so, I live a kind of compromise, busying myself with things related to my "career" and material security, but feeling all the while that my real being and centre lie elsewhere. The result is that I am successful neither in the material or spiritual realm-wasting all these precious moments that will not return in this life.

If I did not have a family, I would be tempted to withdraw from the world and concentrate on my search, and yet I suspect that if I were ready to progress on the Way, I would do so-whatever my external circumstances. Part of my difficulty is that I lack sufficient self-discipline.

The rest of your friends are much the same as when you were here and are very pleased to be remembered by you; they share our anticipation of your next visit.

I would add now that I have recently experienced a growing awareness that despite all my good intentions I have, in fact, been surprisingly self-centred and selfish, particularly in regard to my family. I have not shared myself with them; I have not been sufficiently concerned for them. Whether this awareness will be translated into effective personal growth on my part towards a more mature and responsible love remains to be seen; I certainly hope that this will happen. At least, there is now more possibility for growth. ....

I have felt your influence strongly in the past few days.

Yours sincerely

A....

Dear ....

Your wife is no less a human being than you are. Do not hurt her feelings, vanity also. Sometimes her very identity is inherent in them. Surely you wouldn't like to have a faceless woman in your arms.

It matters little whether you respect her or not, but never hold her sentiments up to ridicule. Exasperated she might as well hit back and make your life a hell on earth. Be sensible enough not to let a situation like that arise.

Be considerate lest she should lose respect for you, in spite of her. It will hurt your manly pride that you have got so very used to.

To every woman her husband is a very important person. (That is what the man thinks anyhow.) She expects him to be gallant and not insensible to shame, courteous and not cringing, truly chivalrous and not stingy, selfish or mean.

She doesn't mind to let her husband have his way. For, if he loses his self-esteem, the loss will be hers too. A less desirable male would affect marital bliss. How? Man is hardly aware but a woman knows.

Your wife wants care, attention. She resents when taken for granted. A thing like willing participation is a fact of life. She yearns for love and to be loved-but not to be abducted or raped. Something that would spell disaster for a married romance. (All this in view of what you have written.)

Be careful, sir. Once a wife starts treating her husband with contempt, the very structure of this sacred relationship crumbles. His dignity gets a rude shock. Married life is then no longer a pleasant affair.

It is in your interest to have harmony in the house. That your wife also suffers is no consolation. Lot of robust good sense is needed for leading a happy married life. Expressing fears and hopes, disappointments and expectations is always helpful. Frank, forthright discussions relieve tension.

What love and understanding can achieve, nothing else can. Everybody has a sixth sense that comes into play off and on.

Sincerely

NATH

19. KEEPING THE CONTROVERSIES

ASIDE

OM! Dear Sir! Once an indignant woman asked: "Are the codes of morality meant for us only? Are we alone to blame for breaking up homes? Since the dawn of history, man has run the affairs of the world. But with what success?

"Leave the woman alone. She can take care of her morals; rest assured."

She had to say something, too, about man's prejudice against the career women.

"If man can combine career with marriage, why a woman cannot? It is his love of money that sends her to work. Shouldn't he mind his own business?

"The moral corruption? Doesn't it take a man to make a woman go astray? Let man first put his own house in order. Water finds its level."

Keeping the indignant controversies aside: Treat your wife as you would like her to treat you. Behave so that she knows what it is to be humanly dignified. Do not smother her human aspirations by the senseless authority of your being the bread-winner. Do find time for her. Leave her not alone to count imaginary sheep through sheer boredom, while you gossip with your friends. Be man enough to be kind and considerate. Do not shout at her, nor be otherwise rough. By losing temper you hurt her pride. Rudeness makes her nervous and takes away the bloom of her sprightly charm. Though young, she looks and feels older than her years.

Do not make her feel small in the presence of friends, yours as well as hers-No trifling with her susceptibilities and self-respect. Your wife is your better half. By hurting her, you hurt yourself. Be sensible.

Do not waste your inviting smiles on strangers. Take interest and fall in love with your own wife. Woman in love is a marvel. When loved she is superb. Abide by her. Her comforting grace can soothe your tired nerves more than a glass of beer in the club. You are precious to her and her love for you is gratifying. When you are not around, to her the whole house looks dull and she feels lonesome.

Once back home, do not sit alone sulking. Your wife hungers for you. Talk to her. Your children need you. Play with them. Do not pull a long face lest that should put all sorts of ideas in their heads. You will look queer to them. Drive dull cares away and rejoice in the company of your wife and children.

As you enter the house, you wipe your shoes on the door- mat, don't you? Why carry the dirt of business worries into the house? Disturbing thoughts should not be allowed to poison the atmosphere at home. Feel restful and be really at home-at least in your own home. You will work better the next day.

No tension of any kind at the dining table. That should be an auspicious occasion, and taking the meal a sacred rite. You sweat for your daily bread. Why toil and moil if you

can't enjoy it? A hurried meal, taken in a tense atmosphere, upsets stomach and sends your nerves crying.

On the sad occasion of his wife's death, an ancient king laments thus: "You kept the house for me and were a great friend of mine. Though my ward, my need of you was always greater. Cruel death has deprived me of a wise counsellor by taking you away." (Kalidas)

Even now, as then, wife plays an important role in man's life.

According to "Shatapatha Brahmana", wife truly complements man and brings about proper emotional integration. Even Manu, the ancient law-giver, blesses a home "wherein husband and wife live happily."

Panch Tantra enunciates six ways to happiness: (i) to have a comfortable income, (ii) to be free from sickness, (iii) to have a loving and (iv) a good-natured wife, (v) to have an obedient child, and (vi) to be educated in a manner that shall give useful employment.

So-in the small world of your home, give a position of honour to your wife. She will feel better. Love her because she is your wife. Respect her because she is the mother of your children.

Because of the motive of profit, you humour strangers who are seldom nice to you. Why can't you be nice to the stranger in the house who serves you so selflessly?

You find your parents right from the start-your birth. They are yours before you know it. You grow up as a son in the family. You grow together as brothers and sisters. But nobody grows up as husband and wife-Providence forgot it probably.

In marriage you meet as strangers. And as strangers you resolve to live together. To make this venture a success, the easiest way is to befriend each other. (You know what friendship means, I need not tell you that ....)

Make friends with your wife. Let her taste true friendship-be warm with selfless love, rich in sentiments and ready to share her weal or woe. For a while take time off to be yourself. Let her also be herself for quite some time. Together then play truant from your own selves, and be together as friends and lovers.

Even after marriage so many people remain strangers. They do not clasp each other's hand in friendship. The earlier they are one in love and friendship the better it is for their

married love, happiness also. Friendship not only needs love but also keeping up human dignity.

Marriage has deprived her of her father's love and all that was sweet home. Reach for her and give her a friendly home, full of man and his love for her. The home will then blossom forth into romance and married happiness. Cherish her. She will cherish the moments of tender love all her life.

A woman in love is truly sublimity, grace and self-denial personified. A child that plays with a lamb enjoys its frolics more than a butcher who weighs it for its meat. Joy of marriage depends directly on how you view it. If you start thinking in terms of sex-appeal, figure and the complexion of your wife's skin, it will hit the married love hard. It is an affront to her feminine dignity and female charm.

Sometimes her talk is unsavoury-because she loves you. Sometimes she is angry-because she needs you and has faith in you. The other woman is sweet. Is it so? It's your silver that gives to her voice the ring of a silver bell. Do not pay and see how she screeches and screams.

Being human, she might err. Be out of humour even. Because of that don't lose temper. Nor hurt her feelings. She too prizes her self-respect. Help her keep up human dignity-womanly pride. And you will be the pride of her life. Even small acts of thoughtfulness mean a lot more to her. Live sensibly and act responsibly. Make your house truly a home—whereunto you give your all before trying to take something out of it.

I wish the woman to rise to her fuller feminine stature. I call upon her to hold aloft the banner: "HONOUR WOMEN BECAUSE THEY ARE MOTHERS". She should refuse to be a weird looking doll of sex and murky charm. Let her dignified behaviour be her attraction.

Old wives' tales that speak ill of women? Heed them not. Eve tempts Adam. I wish man were an angel. He is not. Women lured the saints and caused their fall? God alone can tell whose sex-ridden mind tempted whom. There are women who live sinful lives, I admit. But there are bad men too. Nobody dare deny that. A higher sense of morality is not their prerogative only. In the so-called fall read the writing on the wall: Woman is, and woman there shall be-to soothe the hard-pressed man and allay his fear of the unknown.

God has given her a tender heart that feels and knows love. She is a miracle of God's creation. To have a mother's heart is her privilege only. As such she complements man and her vital role in life is commendable. Without her, man would just limp through life, may even die of sheer boredom.

Man and woman shall inherit the kingdom of heaven. The world of God belongs to both of them. Woman is no enigma, nor her heart a riddle. She tries to be herself when tired of what men make her. Help her on to true womanhood. She is a better companion as a true woman than as a fashionable doll. A doll looks what you make it. A woman is what God made her.

Deep down in her heart she wants her budding womanhood to flower into motherhood*. Rediscover her in

* Motherhood is not merely giving birth to a child-it is something sublime, hard to explain. Turn to Hindu way of life to understand it.

her tenderness for the child she bears. Most of your angularities are rounded off and you become truly human.

Love has no tongue to talk. It has a heart that feels. The unscrupulous beguile her with words of the so-called love and blame her later for frailty. To save her from such a situation, it is enjoined, "Look up to your man for support and guidance." Man knows man's mind better. While you grope, he understands. Dear woman, never mind the mandate if you are wise enough to see through men's game.

In marriage womanhood emerges strong and the woman feels safe. What commands and challenges attention is the rise of motherhood in her. The pure in heart understand and show deference. To them marriage vows are sacred and not a mere social binding or a legal contract.

Man! With a woman by your side, step on to the path of love and self-fulfilment and solemnly survey the life that lies ahead of you two. OM!

Marriage is an eternal challenge to man's sense of full responsibility and woman's sense of self-fulfilment.

20. GROWING OLD

OM! Let me hazard a few words for you, venerable lady: You have turned the corner. The oncoming biological change is a warning. Accept the fact-no frustrations, no heartaches.

Both emotionally and psychologically you are as good or as bad as a girl in her teens. Like her, you too are in the throes of a crisis-of course of a different kind.

Harassed by the crisis of puberty, the young girl is keen to fall into the arms of a man. It takes all the force of tradition, social customs and personal integrity to make her act rationally. By marrying with the sanction of society-she gets over the crisis and feels secure for years ahead.

Your case is a little difficult. You are in for a fear of an unforeseeable future.

Then; that you are losing hold on your life does make you nervous. There is a sudden change in your attitude. You have begun to feel the need of someone to hold on to. Why this sudden feeling of insecurity? I would advise you to turn to your man for sustenance and support. No untried prop please. Abide by him till the crisis is over.

If this sense of belonging comforts in the present crisis-to my mind it should-it's well and good-otherwise turn to God and religion. Why panic? Trust nature and its miraculous insight. Be at peace.

Did you ever regret to have faced the crisis of puberty? Was not youth meaningful, purposeful and gratifying? Now look forward to something better when the ordeal of the biological change is over. Unfortunately the span of human life has not as yet grown to that extent; man often dies while still in the throes of it-the biological change.

To my mind, many of the present-day psychological problems of the old and the young are due to the two crises: the crisis of puberty and the crisis of the change of life (menopause). Their frontiers are not yet defined, nor definite. Life is a growing process and man is still in the making. With our own initiative, let us make the best of the situation we find ourselves in. Nature takes its own course and its own time.

Venerable adult parents! Grow old gracefully. Bitterness will only add to the burden already on your mind. Then: why should you let desires push you around-so much, so often? Now be in full control of them and act responsibly.

Both of you had had your days of batting, now go and sit in the pavilion as interested spectators. Encourage the young to play their games without let or hinderance. Advise only when welcome. Let them learn more from experience.

They already complain that you advise them to do what you yourself never did. Take a hint and keep your counsel.

Leave them alone most of the time-for the life that lies ahead of them lies ahead of you too.

They are ignorant, but so are you. Give friendly advice and that too essentially for their benefit and in good faith. Use your parental authority with a sense of justice and fair play. No vindictive attitude. Why burden your old hearts unnecessarily? Let them fight their own battles and mature early.

Joyously you recall your early days and often look back. The childhood was a lull before the storm that the youthful days are. Now that violence of the winds and weather is over and the stars have appeared in the sky-a serene restful night lies ahead of you-literally and otherwise. Together seek a quiet place and be together in love and peace.

Dear venerable lady! And now a few words for you alone! Do not be in a hurry to transfer your love and attention to your grandchildren. A loving, considerate and full of tenderness companionship is the dire need of your man. Unless you abide by him, he is doomed to a deep-rooted emptiness. Now that the storms of passion are over, he will appreciate your love and kindly care. Be with him in the deepening twilight of old age and earn his deeper love and heartfelt gratitude. Now cheer him up with tender love and better understanding.

Woman is a miracle of life and a natural healer. Gratefully pass your loving arms around his aching waist and give him a tender glance and a sweet smile as of old. Did he not manfully bear the brunt of life's stress and strain?

Last! Having been the darling of his heart, now be the pride of his life. Look up! Old age romance has its own charm. Maybe it blossoms forth into something more than the mere joyous youthful days of old. OM!

PART III

1. A WARNING

नायमात्मा बलहीनेन लभ्यो

न च प्रमादात्तपसो वाप्यलिगांत्।

एतैरुपायैर्यतते यस्तु विद्वां-

स्तस्यैष आत्मा विशते ब्रहम्धाम॥

2, 3, 4, (मुण्डक उपनिषद्)

God-realization is not for him who is weak in spirit and lacks stamina-physical, mental, moral and spiritual. Nor is it possible for him to realize the Ultimate Truth who is callous, careless and has no sense of proprieties and proportions.

An austerity practised without proper guidance and not duly inspired by the higher values of life leads man nowhere. He should instead lead a dedicated life and be blessed with God-realization.

2. NONE DARE DEFY FOR LONG

None dare defy for long

Thy sacred behest

To tear off the veil

That hides from view

Thy resplendant face.

Therein lies for man

His salvation, his glory, his joy-

This denied, deprived or shirked

By accident, will or design

He shall for ever roam

In eternal discontent

With strivings vague and a troubled breast;

A futile, vain and groping endeavour

Shall mark his earthly days.

But once he sets his eyes on Thee

A clear foresight and purpose high

Shall guide and rule his life.

-BHATIA

3. THE HUMAN VALUE

OM! Aspirant! Urged by life's inherent need for self- expression, self-fulfilment, man ever strives to progress and prevail at all levels. The way of life, belief and behaviour that helps him achieve this end, is a higher value of life-a human value Though human, it is afire with a spirit divine, and its potential is great. Miracles in the lives of the saints, great men and the prophets demonstrate it well. They show what difference a human value would make when man lives it responsibly.

From time immemorial, man has been struggling to initiate, create and develop values so that he could live better. By now, he has a whole world of them to provoke, guide and help him progress and prevail. The progress already inspires awe and is edifying.

As well, the human values spark hallowed dreams and illumine a hope of blissful reunion. They blaze man's sagacity and his sense of responsibility. And in them is reflected man's determination to live creatively, progressing ever. This inspired struggle I would term as Tapah that the Vedas speak of.

Such is the miracle of the human values! They bless man with joy of living, and joy's growing meaning and its expanding frontiers. They represent the precious human heritage.

Inspired by the achievements of the higher human values, man has made them the prime basis of the traditions, faiths and religions. That is to appreciate the miracle that a human value is. He could not do better.

Life is a growing process, its circumstances ever change. The changes do not stagger man off his feet. He takes due note of them and ponders. Fired by the will to live, he

creates an appropriate way of life-potent enough to meet the fresh challenge that a change in life poses.

Whatever the handicaps, the limitations and the risks involved, man endeavours to keep pace with life's progress. This miraculous trend to achieve the desired end makes man progressive.

Seeker! You are an individual-the one and only. Your progress is unique. It's a human problem and not a mere abstraction. It needs the human touch-a human value to be precise.

Intrinsically all human values are one, just as all the human beings belong to the human species. In appearance, however, they differ from individual to individual and from people to people. There is unity in diversity. God is one and only. How could the ways of life be several? OM!

Meditation opens wide the doors of perception and leads man on to the very threshold of spiritual experiences. It gives a creative, purposeful and an enduring poise. Poise? That is possible only when you are truly yourself.

4. HUMAN VALUES OF LIFE

OM! Here are the values of life as envisaged by the ancient seers.

1. Have an exalted ideal in mind in each and every walk of life. Live up to it.

2. Have faith in God being Omnipresent and Omnipotent.

3. Tell the truth. Truth? It is to narrate faithfully what a healthy mind and the sublimated sense-urges cognize. To describe it in any other manner is a lie-an untruth. 4. Aspire to transcend the mind and to sublimate its urges, drives.

5. Aspire to walk with God and talk to Him.

6. Love all that lives and environs that which lives.

7. Treat others as you would like to be treated by them.

8. Have a feeling of goodwill for all-no jealousy, no narrow-mindedness. Be always considerate and open-handed.

9. Be guided by the true human spirit.

10. Avoid excesses and do not live beyond your means-at any level and at any stage.

11. Quest for a meaning and the purpose of being.

12. Be human and live sensibly and responsibly.

13. Live with God-do not forget Him ever.

14. Be God-fearing. (To be God-fearing and the fear of God are two separate moods.)

15. Earn by honest means and share that with the less fortunate.

16. Cherish exalted thoughts and take to noble deeds.

17. Readily fight for a noble cause. Let evil alone.

18. Make amends for the wrongs done.

19. Recognise and revere noble souls.

20. Match God's grace with your noble deeds.

21. Be human and humane-work for the good of all.

22. First understand, then do your duty.

23. Believe that God gives us our living and all that we live by.

24. Work (karma) is a human imperative. Take to it and put your heart and soul in it.

25. Believe that God comes first in whatever you do or aspire after.

Wonder if we could add any others? OM!

5. PRAYER-ITS HIGHLIGHTS

OM! Aspirant! Prayer should highlight each day of your life, and prayer-time something to be eagerly looked up to. It should not be a sheer task-to be dreaded, shirked, or glossed over. Let it be a time for aspiring high-Let it be a solemn occasion, not given to profanities.

Tidy up, steady the mind and enlighten the soul-your everyday consciousness even. Don't look casual or shabby, nor smell foul. You are out to meet the Eternal Lover-the Beloved of all.

Do you look listless or slovenly? Does life in you seem to have ebbed away? Is your mind sullied? Does it grovel in the dirt-the sins? Are you rusted all over-with no zest for life left to thrill? Do the gates of the temple-your heart-grate and creak as you throw them open to the noble thoughts? No need to despair, nor give up hope. Yogic Kriyas, Mudras and Pranayama can remedy it all. They stem the ebbing tide of life and promote sparkling health. Tension eases, stress lessens, fatigue vanishes, and a refreshing quietude takes over. A heavenly bliss blooms all over, and you feel delighted and spirited. There is a vigorous, irrepressible drive for purity of heart and thought, honesty of purpose and the transcendent values of life. You breathe in joy and breathe out bliss. The entire being smiles and is gladsome. Buoyant of spirit and joy bubbling all over, you are full of vigour. You get a new lease of life and are fired by a purposeful enthusiasm for seeking new frontiers of higher aspirations.

The disconsolate mind to be soothed and to be set at ease? That is a real hard job. However, the valiant foursome-Yama, Niyama, Pranayama and Pratyahara-of the Eightfold Path of Yoga will help. They are not difficult to practice, nor impossible of approach. They banish the thoughts that disquiet and usher in that which puts you at ease. Oh! The joy divine of a heavenly relaxed mind!

Trust the mystic foursome to do a good job of it. Their sacred touch exhilarates and puts the mind at gladsome repose and rest. Let the mind feel ecstatic and entranced by thoughts divine. Edified thus, the mind will bestir itself with greater vigour and unique aspirations.

No hurrying, no flurrying; just relax. Hold your breath. Pranayama will help you to breathe rhythmic and regular.

No need to hustle around, do not scamper nor scramble. And lust not, be contented. Having overcome the run-down feelings, let the fatigued nerves relax joyously. Be refreshed. Meditating the yoga way will put you at ample ease-ready to face an ugly situation with confidence and faith.

Now, be calm in mind, graceful in spirit, and look humanly dignified in everyday life. Stop worrying. Stop being often tensed up. Avoid the run-run-run-and-grasp approach of modern living. Beware of the impudent cravings. And free yourself from the raving desires.

Neither too tensed up, nor limp and lax. Imbued with a reverence for the Lord, gracefully surrender unto Him. Meditate. Worship.

Ordinarily no need to specify what time to pray. Any time that might claim you-your attention. Time, too, has its own mystic ways. So often, the why and the wherefor of it comes to life and smiles or grimaces. Usually Time itself determines its own time and decides. Its mystic touch might once inspire, but on another occasion it may send you flurrying.

Sometimes Time is as fresh as the morning breeze. Your budding faith enjoys the feel of it. Lo! The faith blossoms forth-into revelations-solemn, sublime. It animates, it unfetters the mind. At some other time, when it scorches like the tropical sun, everything seems to wither inside. Let it be. Weather it all stoically. Wait hopefully and religiously!

Some day, God might choose to visit. Then Time will not matter. He is the Master of Time. Venture forth upon the hazards of life with full faith that the Benevolent One watches with love.

The best time to pray?

You are back home. Wash and change and be tidy and clean. Relax, rest and be at your best. Restful and calm in mind, sit down with the family to have your evening meal. Let it be an occasion to celebrate the family reunion. Thank the Lord for it all, most gratefully.

Later, relax in some quiet corner if you are a manual worker. Let others have their noisy relaxation, if they so desire. Go out for the evening stroll if you have to sit in a chair all day long.

At long last, it's time to go to bed. Both the bed and the body that you carry into it should be orderly, clean and tidy. The bedroom should be airy, bright, neither crowded nor disorderly. It should wear a smiling look. The pictures on the walls should not repel but they should inspire and attract. After all, in so small a space you spend the best part of the day-rather that of your life.

You are in bed for the night. Wind up the day's activities, both mentally and otherwise. Let no anxiety weigh upon your heart. A fatigued and tortured mind is not a healthy bedfellow. Why spoil the chances of a good rest?

The day that kept you busy one way or the other ends now. Offer your prayers in the quiet of the night. The Lord is here! Show Him due respect and deference. Look and be dignified at the time of prayer. No yawning or fidgeting about-that does not look nice while He is there.

Prayer over, humbly take leave of God-your Lord.

Get into bed and go to sleep. Your sleep will be inspired and it will give you a real treat.

Next day, a gentle presence will wake you. The moment you open your eyes, relaxed you are, and wide awake. Get ready and pray to usher in another blessed day! OM!

6. TAPAH-ITS GRACE

OM! Tapah: Let the Sanskrit word not startle you. Scientific terms are equally difficult. Tapah is one of the Niyamas of the Eightfold Path of Yoga.

Tapah starts with asceticism-seemingly meaningless self-denial, self-torture.... But as man walks on the Path, it sets aflame his whole being-man is enlightened spiritually. Tapah gets a meaning and a purpose this way alone.

Tapah is not a blind urge nor a wasteful whim. It is a soul- stirring emotion-a creative urge that works.

As life is, Tapah, too, is a growing process. As it grows, it develops into life-force, capable of evolving higher values of life to further the human cause.

Tapah as asceticism: Austerities practised with intense, purposeful and ever-growing faith give man greater spiritual strength and stamina.

Tapah as Titiksha: Tapah is Titiksha*, a meaningful enthusiasm. It is potent enough to make man realize the creative principle of life-the soul force. Titiksha as a creative effort turns the half-hearted assertions-such as THAT THOU ART-into a revealing spiritual experience. Man comes of age. Titiksha helps man to accomplish what he aspires for!

Aspirant! Heed not those who merely gossip or scoff at the potentiality of the human effort at the spiritial level-the Titiksha. If you could but go behind a lucky chance, a seeming miracle, or some sudden achievement-you will discover a blazing trail of sweating spiritual toil in the immediate or some distant past (some past birth). Alas! the span of human life is rather short! And our memory fails us before and after death-

apparently the continuity of life breaks off. (It is not possible to recall how you felt when you

* Titiksha is an enduring effort-primarily on the spiritual plane. It gives the power of endurance and forbearance and wakes up divine vibhutis-spiritual powers.

were a small baby. How can you possibly recall what you were before you were born?)

Seeker! I will not labour this point, lest I should disturb those who believe in miracles and thus keep alive their faith in the Miraculous. Let their hearts ever throb with Love of God!

However, we should not ever lose hope, nor be ever given to dark unfounded forebodings. Benevolence of the Lord has room enough for miracles. Still, as a miracle is not an every day affair let us not sit idle or just dream.

"They also serve who sleep and dream,"--someone in whom the faith in the supernatural dies hard might flash out. Rejuvenated and refreshingly inspired by the holy dreams, let us endeavour ever to take to Titiksha-so that life's tasks are not left undone or left half-done.

Who said miracles? I believe in them. Miracles do happen. A miracle is God's benevolence in the offing. That is my belief. You might retort: "Why should I then endeavour at all? Won't it be better to wait for a miracle to happen?"

Aspirant! You will have to toil all the same. Miracles are the wages of deep faith. Faith of sterling worth is rare. It takes its cue from and grows with Tapah. The ancient seers say:

यह संसार और जो कुछ इस संसार में है, वह सब तप * का फल है।

The world and whatever is therein rises from Tapah. That is what the ancient seers realized and said. And that is how their effort for God-realization came to be known as Tapah.

What is this wonderous Tapah? To state it precisely, I will have to define the five dimensions of Karma (action). In the words of the Gita (XVIII-13 to 15) they are:

Tulsi Dass says:

तप बल रचइ प्रपंच विधाता। तप बल विष्नु सकल जग त्राता।।

तप बल संभु करहिं संहारा। तप बल सेष धरइ महिभारा।।

तप अधार सब सृष्टि भवानी॥

(i) Locale (अधिष्ठान): the place, time and environment where a particular action is to take place.

(ii) The doer (कर्ता): one who performs the action.

(iii)Karana (करण): the instrument, the Saadhan (साधन), the wherewithal or the ways and means employed to do something.

(iv) Effort (चेष्टा): endeavour needed to accomplish something.

(v) Providence (दैवम): the unknown factor. It is the element of chance, the element of miracle, God's grace.

Tapah is at once the third and the fourth dimension of Karma. It is the wherewithal and the requisite effort to bring into operation an action-the karma.

Since the five dimensions are essentially involved in the performance of Karma, so Providence-the element of Grace is inherent in what we do. The action itself is a great accomplishment-nothing short of a miraculous achievement. As it is, I am not entirely wrong when I ardently hope for a miracle to happen in whatever I undertake to do. Scientists! Pray, leave me alone. I gladly concede that your chance discoveries were also nothing short of miracles.

वेदोक्तेन प्रकारेण कृच्छ्रचान्द्रायणादिभिः ॥ ३॥

शरीरशोषणं यत्तत्तप इत्युच्यते बुधैः ।

कोऽहं मोक्षः कथं केन संसारं प्रतिपत्रवान् ।। ४ ।।

इत्यालोचनमर्थज्ञास्तपः शंसन्ति पण्डिताः ॥ ५॥

(Suta Samhita, 3, 4, 5 page 214).

As a human worth Tapah is to reduce (extra fat), and keep the physical body fit and trim by fasting, etc. ....

As a higher value of life: Tapah is to contemplate and ponder over the three eternal questions-(i) the wherefore and the wherefrom of the universe? (ii) what am I? And (iii) what is my ultimate destiny? OM!

If death will ever break its silence and talk, it shall speak highly of the indomitable human spirit and the human (flaming) faith that it could not shake.

7. AHIMSA-TRUTH OF IT

OM! Seeker! Humanity, today as ever, lives in terror. Men are ruthless and given to vehemence and violence. Of a sudden, they are angered-they frown and fume, flash and flare up. They boil, they burst out-they roar, they riot, ride rough-shod and they run amuck. They storm, they shock and they spread like wildfire destroying all that comes in their way.

There may not be a war going on but the war hysteria is always there. What a paradox! Wars are fought to bring in peace! Men lose their lives to save lives. The war hysteria bursts out here in violence, there in gruesome killings and elsewhere as a constant threat to peace. Alas! Man is trembling with fear. He lives in fear, sleeps with fear weighing upon his heart. Why? But why? Isn't this world of ours the creation of the Lord, a Benevolent One?

Is there no remedy? The Creator must have some purpose in mind. But why such a fearful purpose?

Aspirant! There is such a thing as fear complex; no denying the fact. And fighting fears is man's major preoccupation, deny as he may. Ninety-nine out of a hundred suffer from fear and the one who says he does not is the one who is afraid to tell the truth. That is what makes fear a human problem.

Fear is good, fear is bad as the circumstances make it. Basically fear might be unreasonable; it is hard, however, to reason it out. It is not easy to will it away because it is a dimension of the mind.*

Fear is man's lot. He will have to live with it till it has outlived its usefulness. As things are, anything may inspire awe, excite fear, alarm or startle awfully. Of a sudden man takes fright and at times he even dies of horror.

Fears are various and manifold. There is no end to them. Theirs is an ever-growing number-with the advance of civilization and its progress in the field of scientific technology. The primitive man was probably better off in this respect.

Fear of darkness, that of loss of support and fear of loud noises and that of vast spaces-these are some of the natural fears. The rest are all acquired. Be it the fear of not getting enough, or the fear of the unknown or an uncertain tomorrow in the present nuclear age.

What is fear? It is an emotion. Corresponding to an emotion there is an instinct. The instinct that corresponds to fear is escape-to seek safety. Man ducks for protection instinctively. As we are, the element of fear cannot be ruled out, and our effort to seek safety is but natural. Fear is the NUMBER ONE human problem, and seeking safety comes next.

Seeker! Mere denial of fear or running away from it will not make a saint of you. Had the Lord wished it so, He would have created you fear-free. Alas! He did not. Pray as you might, the problem of fear is a reality. To seek safety is also true-an important part of life.

• कामः संकल्पो विचिकित्सा श्रद्धाऽश्रद्धा।

धृतिर् अधृतिर् ह्रीर् धीर् भीर् इत्येतत् सर्वं मनः॥

Kamah, samkalpa, samshya, shraddha, ashraddha, dhriti, adhriti, lajja, buddhi and bhaya-these are the ten dimensions of the mind. Bhaya is fear complex.

(Brih: 6/1/3)

You would probably turn round and say: "You have been posing the problem; why don't you provide the answer too?" My answer is, "Practise Yoga in general and observe Ahimsa as its integral part in particular."

Fear is a human problem. Seeking safety is also a human problem. Human problems are solved at the human level. That is the law; otherwise the human values would not have been worth bothering about. Ahimsa is a human value par excellence. It is adequate to meet the challenge that fear poses or seeking safety as a human problem sets forth.

What is Ahimsa? It is a human value. No human value can be expressed adequately. Life is a growing process. How can its values be pinned down to one single proposition? As life progresses, its values grow in meaning and purpose. They take on new roles to play to be in consonance with the changing patterns of life.

In everyday life, Ahimsa means: non-killing, non- violence. That is what this Sanskrit word would normally indicate. But the literal translation is inadequate. It robs it of its

intrinsic merit and glory as a human value. It reduces it to a mere controversy, or at best a negative virtue-as all the don'ts are.

Under the circumstances, it is imperative to rescue Ahimsa from those who give it their own meaning and one particular sense of purpose. Let us try to express factually what Ahimsa as a human value is. To my mind, it is inherent in life and is an integral part of the religion of man. Let us study it in all its aspects.

Himsa (हिंसा) is a Sanskrit word. It means killing. Ahimsa (अहिंसा) is, therefore, non-killing, non-violence. As life is, it feeds upon itself and grows. We live off one another. I talk of life at all levels, be it flora or fauna, be it vegetable or animal-man included. How do we define life anyhow? Anything that comes into being, grows, then dies, is animated with life; it is alive.

But you are human. You are capable of compassion and sacrifice. While thinking of killing, you might have felt bad. In desperation, you might have even protested to the powers that be: "Hereby I lodge my protest against killing." Still finding no answer, the human in you might have blurted out: "I will! I vow that I shall not kill.

Inspired by the human sentiments, you did resolve to live up to what you willed. Fired by the noble aspiration, you went a step forward and solemnly declared: "Ahimsa Paramo Dharma (अहिंसा परमो धर्मः :). Ahimsa is a noble sentiment. It is an expression of the higher aspirations of man. It is a human value, a lofty ideal.'

The idea to have a world wherein there are no killings is commendable. Let it be a solitary voice-speak out. It is your human right to express as you wish, want or feel. Let them oppose who will. It is not a cry in the wilderness. It will find a hearty response somewhere. The human element in you has become vocal. Humanity has taken another step forward. It is an undertaking to evolve itself into a noble sort of creation.

As inspired by the higher ideals of freedom, people do not wait for the government to take the initiative, but they themselves take to doing what is good for all. That is not taking the law into one's own hands. That flows from a healthy democratic way of life. The initiative taken, however, is in direct proportion to one's faith in the freedom of choice.

Similarly, fired by the spirit of Ahimsa you, too, should not wait for Divinity to take the initiative but you yourself should initiate and endeavour to usher in a compassionate

tomorrow. That will not make you irreligious. That is not acting against the will of God. That will be in consonance with the true human spirit-man's Dharma (the religion of man). Of course, herein the initiative taken by you will be in direct proportion to your faith in Ahimsa.

As such, Ahimsa will emerge as a great revolutionary force, a higher human imperative.

You have taken the initiative to practise Ahimsa (non- killing, non-violence). You have taken a vow to avoid Himsa (killing, violence)-little knowing, however, that you will be up against the very same factor of life which keeps you alive. As life is, it feeds upon itself and grows. That is to say, Himsa (हिंसा) is necessary. You cannot do without killing for food. To oppose Himsa (हिंसा) is the same as decrying sex. As life is, procreation is not possible without sex-urge being there. The one who decries sex knows fully well that he owes to it his own coming into being.

But that does not mean you should not take to the Ahimsa way of life. There is nothing unnatural about it. To seek to change the nature of things is quite in consonance with the human spirit. It's natural and quite legitimate. Change is the very essence of all life. How will you justify evolution otherwise?

The vow to avoid Himsa (f) and the initiative taken in that direction by practising Ahimsa-is a new way of life. Ahimsa is man's passive resistance-Satyagraha-against Nature, against himself too. Man starts with offering Satyagraha against his own nature by ordaining: "Thou shalt not kill." He couldn't do better. He could not do otherwise. It was the only sensible thing to do. He could not possibly alter the very structure of life itself.

Alas! Man is not yet fully seized of this human venture. He doesn't understand its implications, even its deeper significance. He has also no idea about its human potentialities. He is doing nothing and is standing aloof, as many people felt like doing when Mahatma Gandhi (and seventy-eight men and women from his Ashram) began the famous Dandi March to break the British Salt Laws. The sceptics laughed at the Salt Satyagraha. They said: "An ounce of common salt picked up from the sea beach will not shake the British hold on India." They scoffed at the very idea of this sort of non-cooperation. "In the morning Mahatmaji ate the salt on which the British had already collected the salt duty," they jeered.

But the Satyagraha? It sparked off a mighty movement which shook the British Imperialism to its roots and gave the down-trodden Indian masses a new lease of life. And to their lives it gave a new dimension: an indomitable will to be free!

Ahimsa, as Satyagraha, re-ordains man's thinking. It gives a new dimension to human life and a different import to man's thinking. Allow the dynamism of this new-yet as old as life-idea to grow and gather momentum. Let it become a force to reckon with. Maybe the mystic dynamism of Ahimsa will usher in a world order wherein it will not be necessary to kill. Life itself will then metamorphose and change materially. (At least, man will not kill man unnecessarily.) He might be able to get over the world-old feeling of "survival of the fittest". He might even gladly concede-not as a matter of policy but as an article of his faith-that every one has an equal right to live. Possibly, he might outlaw all senseless wars and declare categorically:

"Man shall not kill man." That will be a day of triumph for the human-in-man which is already steadily gaining ground in the hearts of men all over the world. May Lord help Man to triumph-the sooner the better.

Now: That was Ahimsa as non-killing, non-violence. Its potentialities are really great. I can only point out, but I am in no position to assert it.

Aspirant! Now I come to what Ahimsa truly is! It is different from and quite contrary to the common belief. I will take you beyond the human horizon into the mystic realms of divinity. I will not be surprised if you react violently to the challenge of the uncommon views expressed by me. However, I welcome it all. For, I want you to be jolted out of the beaten tracks and the deep grooves in which your mind moves as lifeless routine.

Earlier, I myself was never clear in my mind about Ahimsa-Something did stir within me and kept bristling but I knew not what it was. However, I was restlessly aware of this unique dimension of life which could give a sublime dignity to my being-if I could not in principle alone, but otherwise also could live it somehow.

Now I know: it is Ahimsa. How? Let me take you back to the day:

Long ago: I was staying with Bawaji, my Guru. As it was cold, we sat near the fire. Suddenly I noticed a log of firewood, full of ants! With one end of the moth-eaten log in the burning fire, the ants were fleeing their doom from the sides and the other end. From

inside the "holes" they were hurrying out. I could feel the panic. For the ants it was a house on fire. I could not hear them scream, but I did see them stampede!

I felt disturbed. Since it was I who had put this moth-eaten log into the fire, hence I should take it out. As I stretched my hand, Bawaji caught hold of it and said: "Let them die where they belong!"

Some such words he did say to my utter surprise. That stunned me. Bawaji, a saint, not trying to save, but letting the poor helpless creatures die? My Ahimsa-sense shrieked in desperation. What Bawaji did baffled me. It shocked me to see him sit unperturbed, unconcerned! The gruesome sight became more horrid, nauseating. Soon it was bedtime.

The ants scurrying out from the burning log kept haunting me in my sleep. I could not shove the idea off my mind. I felt restless. Of a sudden I got up and sat on my bed. My thoughts turned to the Gita and I thought of the Lord addressing Arjuna: "Arjuna! You grieve for those who should not be grieved for, and yet you speak in the manner of men of culture and learning! Truly, wise men do not sorrow over the dead or the living." (GITA II.11).

I tossed in bed. I could not sleep. Suddenly I heard Bawaji call: "Raushan! Are you still awake? It is late in the night. Go to sleep. You need rest." His voice was full of anxiety and I could feel his loving care. A strange calm took over and I was soon fast asleep.

Years have rolled by. I have slept over the incident, forgotten about it, and have let it revolve in my mind. Now let me dive deep and see:

Ahimsa as a way of life (and a higher human value) is the realization of a great truth that man can neither give life nor can take it away. Both life and death are beyond the human pale. It is entirely God's province. Under the circumstances, man must not fear death nor be afraid that any calamity would befall him unless He wills it so. And it is fundamentally true that nothing can ever happen to man unless it is going to serve His purpose. It's true as well that His purpose does intrinsically relate to man. It belongs to him and his inner being.

That is how I would define Ahimsa! And this is what Suta Samhita says:

वेदोक्तेन प्रकारेण विना सत्यं तपोधन।

कायेन मनसा वाचा हिंसा हिंसा न चान्यथा ॥ ४॥

आत्मा सर्वगतोऽच्छेद्य अदाह्य इति या मतिः ।

सा चाहिंसा परा प्रोक्ता मुने वेदान्तवेदिभिः ।। ५ ।।

(Suta Samhita, page 210, Shloka 4 & 5)

"Himsa (हिंसा) is to act against the spirit divine of the Vedas. It is to act against the dictates of Dharma.

"Ahimsa is the true understanding (मतिः) of the fundamental truth that Atma (Soul) is imperishable, immutable and all-pervading (सर्व व्यापक). To interpret Himsa or Ahimsa in any other manner is incorrect."

That should settle it.

For Ahimsa to be truly a human value, it is imperative that man should be able to live it.

Do I have to worship, do Tapah or chant mantras to be human? I am born a human being. I need not pray for Ahimsa. It is a human value. All that I have to do is to grow in human stature and reach a level of human elevation where the Ahimsa becomes my very nature-prakriti.

Still: With a little understanding and the training of the mind, I can practise Ahimsa. It is one of the Yamas of the Eightfold Path of Yoga. In Yoga, it is enjoined: "Thou shalt not kill, nor injure." As I take to the path of Yoga, I will be committing myself to practise Ahimsa as well.

A small girl playing with a doll's house is living the ordained future. It will be an actuality when she matures into womanhood. By practising Ahimsa, I will be living the ordained future. I will comprehend and live true Ahimsa when I truly mature spiritually.

Ahimsa being inherent in life and being an integral part of it, is a growing process-as life is. It grows in meaning and in purpose as life grows spiritually. Let me grow (in stature) spiritually to merit the Ahimsa way of life.

Strange but truly firm are the ways of the Lord. He enjoins something but does not leave it at that. He follows it up and sees it through. There is a constant reminder to goad life on. Both death and decay constantly remind me of the Immortal One, the Sanatana. The change, the transformation, the metamorphosis even-they send me questing for the Immutable, the Changeless, the Eternal, the Sanatana (सनातन)! The pain that

distresses, impresses upon me the desirability of seeking the Eternal Bliss. And fear? It stands fully justified. It, too, has a meaning and a purpose. Though the language that it speaks is frightening, it means well. Its frightfulness jolts me into an awareness of Ahimsa as a human value.

Once this awareness dawns upon me, I become fearless. No longer does fear haunt me or scare. No more quaking with fear; nor cringing for mercy here, there and everywhere. I gain a dignified human stature. Inspired by the spirit of Ahimsa, I start living with the consciousness that no harm can come to me unless it serves His purpose. As I grow spiritually-in Ahimsa I realise the Great Truth: I AM THAT (Aham Brahma asmi). And Ahimsa calls out to me reassuringly: "Why fear? TAT TVAM ASI.... THAT THOU ART."

The realization of this fundamental Truth of life gives me confidence and an undying faith in the omnipotence of my soul. And I become conscious of an upsurge of a strong soul- force which adds a new dimension to my life-that of a strong sense of human dignity. I feel dignified and strong in the belief that I do have a great future.

To sum up: Ahimsa starts as an imperceptible stir in the human consciousness and man protests feebly in a wee little voice against senseless killing.

Life progresses and with it man moves forward to realize the desirability of a non-violent approach to life and its problems. He tries to think in terms of assuring a place in the sun for all the living beings. The idea that only the fittest shall survive, no longer finds favour with him.

As life grows, man starts eschewing violence as a principle of human living and feels encouraged by the results. Love begets love and trust ensures trust. Slowly man begins to feel less obsessed with the fear complex. That reassures him. And emboldened by it, he thinks in terms of living in a world wherein nobody shall ever kill.

As life advances, the Ahimsa way of life finds its rightful place in man's life and he begins to think of it religiously. To him Ahimsa becomes an article of his faith. What started as a slight stir in the human consciousness ends up as a sublime spiritual way of life. It inspires the hearts of the faithful, and man accepts it as a higher human, nay the highest spiritual value.

Let men take to the Ahimsa way of life more and more. They will find it adequate and potent enough to overcome mutual hatred and fear. Let the area of accord and mutual cooperation become wider and vaster and let there be greater goodwill amongst the peoples of the world. And let us hope that inspired by the spirit of Ahimsa men shall recognise the futility of mutual strife and the desirability of mutual love and brotherhood. Even as the world is, Ahimsa has worked a miracle by humanizing man's life to a larger extent. Let Ahimsa prevail and let the divine spirit behind it bless man's endeavour to live it as God commands or wills.

8. HUMAN SPIRIT AND AHIMSA

OM! Aspirant! How happy a rat would feel if every cat was born with a bell tied round its neck. The cat would move, the bell would ring, and the rat would flee. But Providence doesn't oblige because that would make the cat an easy prey to its natural enemies.

When in danger of life, even an insignificant little insect is suddenly disposed to violence. It fights for life and attacks the potential enemy. What is it that prompts it to fight back? It is its will to live-life poised against itself-the soul force in a fine battle array. It is Sat (सत)-the first dimension of life-that animates life to prevail so that it can grow and fulfil itself.

Life is a growing process. As it grows, the meaning and the purpose of Sat (सत) grows till it grows into the human spirit.

The human spirit? It is a unique dimension of life. It vibrates with the soul-force and bristles with meaningful activity. It demolishes sloth and fights apathy. Animated by it, man shows greater interest in life and gladly gets involved in it. He is actuated to defy decay, defeat death.

The human spirit puts man on the war path and he grows into man, the tool-maker-making tools of offence and defence.

But man is a rational being. He rationalizes whatever he does. Whenever he is disposed to violence he rationalizes his violent trends and deeds as a struggle for existence.

So long as man is what he is (he is in the making still), he will have to live dangerously-ever ready to fight for peace. India knows it to her cost what it means not to resort to fighting for peace. She lost her soul and is still in quest of it. As things stand, India must rediscover herself. She must build up her national character and be fired by the vibrant

human spirit. In the Ramayana, people of India have the most significant human document to look up to for guidance.

Lord Rama fought for peace all his life and gave Ram- rajya to his people. India aspires after that ideal way of life even today. I often tell my friends: "Take away the spirit of Ramayana and you demolish overnight the very basis of Indian culture." Howsoever odd it may look but the fact remains: "Dharma ki raksha talwar karti hai"

To protect his faith man has to fight a running battle. Isn't what I write against the human spirit? No, it is not. It is against the tamasi dhriti which is the anti-thesis of the human spirit of growth. Men of tamasi dhriti masquerading as men of religion know not what Ahimsa truly is. What they rationalize as the spirit of Ahimsa, is in fact the fear complex. This fear complex distorts human vision and demolishes man's initiative and betrays the human spirit. Ahimsa is in fact a way of life. It is what the human spirit grows into as life progresses on the spiritual level. It is a higher human value that transcends all that is ineffective and weak in spirit.

Seeker! Aspire to live as the human spirit actuates.... OM!

Fear saps the will to live. Ahimsa demolishes the fear complex and restores self-confidence. Fired by it, man follows his vocation with courage.

9. THE WILL TO WORK-ITS DISTRACTIONS

OM! Aspirant! To my mind, both success and failure are a break, a breather, a breathing time. Man cries halt and stops his activity to assess and reassess the whole position. In a way, it is a truce, an armistice signed with the forces man is up against. As such there is no success absolute nor a failure full and final. In both the cases-though still capable of endeavour, he fails to respond effectively to the call of life.

Seeker! Success is soft, happy-go-lucky, a habitual shirker; small achievements satisfy. Failure? From the very look of it, it appears determined to go ahead and aim high. There is no let up to soothe the bruised toiling man. It is intent on taking him on to the unattainable heights-before nightfall.

Let neither success nor failure matter. Let them not distract you either. Do not let down the will to work and strive on. OM!

Be not surprised when the usually unkind world around suddenly offers to do you some good turn. God is Great.

Revere the kindly person. For he had had the touch of His Grace. It's the Lord who wills, but credit also goes to him who heeds His Command! That's what makes gratitude an imperative human value.

10. VIRTUE-ITS ENUNCIATION

OM! Aspirant! Not to react strongly against evil is unmanlike. Whosoever succumbs to, or is indifferent to the presence of evil, is committing a sin. And whosoever is ready to fight evil at every step is truly devoted to the Lord--he is virtuous.

Do you feel restless? Does the mind wander when you meditate? Do evil thoughts bother you a lot? Pray, don't blame the poor mind alone. Search your heart as well. You might have betrayed the good by yielding to or abjectly surrendering to evil. To be half a man yourself, and to try to woo and win divinity-what a fallacy!

Be human! Live life responsibly, vigorously. Display an edifying human spirit in what you aspire for and what you do. Live sensibly-both subjectively and objectively. Be practical. Without a strong sense of fair play and objectivity life does not take off easily.

Life is a growing process. Grow with it-physically, mentally, morally, spiritually. Lagging behind in any one of these aspects will cause imbalance and jeopardize growth.

Keep abreast of and act in consonance with the growing process of life in order to be truly human and manlike. OM!

11. SELF-SURRENDER

OM! Aspirant! A lot has been and is even now being said about self-surrender. I myself did advocate it in various contexts and on different occasions. I was, however, seldom aware of its true significance.

Normally, self-surrender is to accept gracefully an unhappy situation. Instead of grumbling and tormenting myself I should say: "What has happened has happened, it cannot be undone now. What will be, will be-despite my wishing otherwise." As such it is to endure what cannot be cured. It is to recognize the simple fact that nobody can win unless someone else loses.

I know it is difficult to accept defeat without fretting or fuming. But once I accept the position I can rationalize this act of mine thus: (i) I resigned myself to my fate, (ii) I surrendered unto God's will.

Seeker! Surrender as such is a phenomenon of the mind. It is a dimension of dhriti (f). (Dhriti itself is a phenomenon of the mind.) According to the inevitable Gita, the dhriti is of three kinds:

(i) The uninhibited, propitious and noble aspiration which inspires man to practise yoga and sublimate thereby his mind and its drives-is a sattviki dhriti* (सात्त्विकी धृति);

(ii) whereby fired, a man of the world ardently works for his living and spends his earnings for noble purposes-is a rajasi dhriti (राजसी धृति);

A noble bent of mind.

(iii)that which makes man perverted, listless, timid and full of lust for sensual pleasures-is a tamasi dhriti* (तामसी धृति).

Under the circumstances, you have to be careful. You should see to it that self-surrender is not prompted by a tamasi dhriti. That will make your life miserable and it will mean an abject surrender to the baser-self.

Preferably let a sattviki dhriti inspire self-surrender, whenever an occasion arises. That will be sublime and exalted. Failing that, let a rajasi dhriti fire you with a spirit of self-surrender.

Now I come to self-surrender which is a human value and not a mere phenomenon of the human mind. Any thought or action inspired by a sattviki dhriti or a rajasi dhriti is a human value. And it is the human spirit which prompts man to act accordingly.

Self-surrender as a human value: It's a thing apart. Its meaning and purpose grow as life grows spiritually. It rises from the flaming faith. It becomes natural when man walks with God and aspires to talk to Him.

Aspire to spiritual awakening and you will begin to understand what self-surrender truly is. It is a vital dimension of the phenomenon of God-realization.

That brings me to the mechanics of self-surrender. Accept God's purpose as being supreme. Live life responsibly despite what it is. This is real self-surrender, prapatti (प्रपत्ति), sharanagati (शरणागति). It is a virtue, a higher human value. To be able to live

it you will have to initiate, create and develop a way of life whereof self-surrender forms an integral part. It's the yoga way of life. Turn to God! There is no other way.

"Even in our resignation we belie

The trust we seem to repose in Thee.

An ignoble bent of mind.

Resignation is too poor a cover

For the subterranean strife within;

'Tis a cheap device indeed

To cover ignorance up with a show of wit

And shove on from our shoulders

The burden of all the moral ills."

12. CHARITY

OM! Aspirant! Learn to give in charity. Give for the sake of giving.

Be charitable but not like the glutton about whom I will talk to you presently. Where is he?

Let us invite the gentleman to dinner tonight. He lives to eat, unlike those who eat to live.

You need not tell your wife, otherwise she will lock up the kitchen and go to a neighbour's house. Tell her you have invited a few friends to dinner and there is a possibility of a few more dropping in. She does not mind your friends coming to dinner in numbers, but the glutton's case is different.

Here comes our friend. "What is cooking?" He says in the real sense of the word 'cooking'. That's a warning. Disgusted, your wife does go away to her neighbour's house. Anyway the servant is there. Only recently engaged, so he knows not our friend's habits. Ignorance is bliss for him. Ask the servant to lay the table.

The servant hesitates. Probably, he is waiting for the other guests to arrive. He doesn't know that our friend is as good as many.

Let us sit down.

The guest looks around.

"Oh, it is all right. It is no use waiting for the others to come. Probably they are late."

"Please go ahead. I will wait for them," you plead.

Now: On his plate, you pile up the baked loaves of bread. The guest gloats over the pile and the dishes being served, one by one. Satisfied, he fingers through the pile. He pushes his chair close to the table. One by one, he brings the dishes closer.

All set, he is ready-as if for an assault. He looks towards you. You look away. That's good. The servant is watching. Embarrassed a little, our friend beckons him to come over. The servant walks up to him. The gentleman picks up two loaves out of the lot and says: "Take them away. I am not a glutton who would eat them all."

As the servant moves away, our friend calls him back and says in an undertone: "I will call for more, if need be. There is no formality."

Our friend eats up all the loaves of bread. The poor servant had to bake some more for him.

Seeker! That was a glutton who ate more than he ought to. There are some people who are gluttons in other ways. They amass wealth and greedily gloat over it. For getting more, they give "in charity". But their charity is like that of the glutton mentioned above. To them giving in charity is an investment like any other. They expect the God-bonds-the charities-to pay fabulous dividends, and a place in paradise thrown in, in the bargain. That is their notion about charity.

Seeker! Learn to give and be of charitable disposition. But be also mindful of the one who is at the receiving end. OM!

13. RENUNCIATION

OM! Aspirant! What is renunciation? This was the question that a disciple would ask his Master time and time again.

The Master and the disciple once had to cross a river. The boat was there and the boatman, too. But he wanted money to ferry them across.

The disciple pleaded, but his guru refused to part with his money. Thereupon, the disciple made the payment and was ferried across.

After some days, he came back and asked the same question.

"I answered your question the day you left me behind and crossed the river," said the guru.

The disciple apologised for leaving him stranded, but the master continued: "Try to understand. So long as the money remained in your pocket, the boatman kept you waiting. Only when you "renounced" it, he came forward to help. Renunciation is the spirit and not a mere desire to part with things for a personal gain.

The disciple heard it all with rapt attention and said: "Revered Master, I understand.'

Aspirant! True renunciation is to accept one's moral responsibility to think and work selflessly for the good of all. That is the only rational view about this human value.

Renunciation is Aparigraha (non-possession), one of the dimensions of the Eightfold Path of Yoga. Man can readily renounce only when he sublimates his inordinate desire to possess. That helps him to grow spiritually. OM!

A saint is always eager to answer questions that a seeker would ask. And a seeker would learn many things that might not otherwise occur to him at all. This is what is Sat-Sang. It is Siddhanta-Vakya-Shravanam-one of the Niyamas of the Eightfold Path of Yoga.

14. YOGA-A HUMAN VALUE

OM! Aspirant! Life is yet in the making. It is in the process of growing. As it grows, its meanings grow as well. As such, man is in for one crisis or another. Whenever he fails to keep pace with the growing process of life or is unable to grasp its ever-changing meaning, a problem does arise-it is a human problem however.

The remedy for a human problem is essentially a human value, and not some extraneous abstraction. For, unless a remedy belongs to man intrinsically it is doomed to failure from the very start.

That means, a human value which sets out to solve a human problem should be an integral part of man's being. It should be a phenomenon of life. It should be inherent in man. That is what Yoga is as a human value.

Yoga is man's eternal quest for his right place in Life so that he can give the best of himself to fulfil God's will creditably.

Yoga is life, the vigour of life and life's God-inspired drive to live fully. It does not doubt God's wisdom, nor is it presumptuous enough to advise the Lord to create the world anew. Yoga inspires men to have full faith in divine wisdom and to seek fulfilment in the world as it is.

The world does not repel, but it fascinates and strikes a reverent note in a Yoga-student's heart. He realizes that just as soil is essential for the seed to germinate, sprout, take root similarly the world is essential for man's growth. and grow, The aspirant needs the world to grow into so that he can outgrow his limitations better.

What is there in the name? Don't call it Yoga if you like. Give it the name you prefer. To me, what makes man quest is Yoga. What helps man in his quest is Yoga. And the quest itself is Yoga again.

To be in quest of God is to practice Yoga. Quest implies interest and interest implies quest; the keener the quest, the deeper the interest. Love God. Love life. Love the world, love all who live in it. Love truly. It's the same as practising Yoga. A seed cannot choose the soil to grow into but you can. In the seed's case it's the soil, in your case it's your faith. Find your faith to find your God. Prefer flaming faith-faith in its nascent state, emanating from a spiritual experience!

Again: Yoga strikes a creative note in man's life and his endeavour. It is a unique enterprise of the spirit. Its Yamas, Niyamas, Asanas, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana, and Samadhi work severally and integrally to further the human cause.

Yoga helps develop in man a new force, a fresh drive! It sparks new talents and helps man evolve new potentialities. It reveals the mystic dimensions of man-the so-called higher values of life.

Once the awareness of human values dawns upon man, he feels fascinated and is on their track. He becomes eager to initiate, create and develop a way of life that should enable him to live them in his life. His tenacity of purpose and a determined endeavour knows no slackening and he strives on!

As man advances, new horizons open up and new dimensions-both moral and spiritual-are added to his quest. Because of them, he realizes the purpose of his being, and fired by them he strives to fulfil his destiny.

As man is spiritually aroused, he finds himself living as He wills. And His consciousness starts bordering on the awareness sublime!

Aspirant! Quest the Yoga way and see what an overwhelming difference its creative urge makes! OM!

Yoga is a prayer in words as well in deeds.

15. YOGA A HUMAN VENTURE THOUGH DIVINE

OM! Before I write about the Eightfold Path of Yoga, I may mention: Yoga is more than a mere faith. Not just a sadhana, it is a way of life. It has a philosophy of its own- Like any other religion, it has its own myths, mythology, legends, traditions also.

The eight dimensions of yoga are the eight values of life. Each value, in its turn, has two dimensions: (1) What is inherent in man (as an integral part) is a human worth; and (2) What he aspires to live up to is a higher value of life.

Human worths make man a worthy human being. And the higher values of life initiate, create and develop what goes into the making of a higher being-individually as well as collectively. In the process, he is becoming aware of the human potentialities.

The yoga-sadhana-a human venture-is man's mite. It is unique-unique in the sense that the approach is individually each one's own. God's Might as Grace and man's mite as karma are remaking man. Both of them are deeply involved-together they work in unison. Thus yoga is a human venture, though divine.

As things are: man lives by his own endeavour, human worths inherent in him, and the higher values of life he aspires to live up to. That is what he comes by the moment he comes into being.

For that matter, yoga too comes by naturally with the first breath that the newborn inhales, retains and exhales. It is Pranayama-a natural phenomenon that sustains life and helps its growth.

Simple actions-sitting in an asana, pulling the mind out of its haunts, practising Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi- have great potentialities. Their worth is great.

Look at an artist. In his studio look at the commonplace things at his command. An easel, a wooden board, colours, brushes and the art paper or a piece of canvas. And the sculptor? A slab of stone and some nondescript tools. Maybe some other odd things too. But behold what do they create? A beautiful painting. A striking statue. Grand pieces of art!

Hereby the Eightfold Path of Yoga gives you commonplace things-Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi. Initiate, create and develop a remarkable personality out of what you are by living them in your life. You can do it, as sure as you are! OM!

16. THE EIGHTFOLD PATH OF YOGA

Now the Eightfold Path of Yoga: Its eight dimensions are: Yama, Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi.

YAMA: It enjoins: (i) Ahimsa (अहिंसा), (ii) Satya (सत्य), (iii) Asteya (अस्तेय), (iv) Brahmacharya (ब्रहमचर्य), (v) Kshama (क्षमा), (vi) Dhriti (f), (vii) Daya (T), (viii) Arjava (3), (ix) Mitahara (मिताहार), (x) Shaucha (शौच).

(i) As a human worth, Ahimsa is non-violence. It is not to act in defiance of but in consonance with the human spirit. It is a human approach to all problems. (Care should be taken, however, that one does not dignify cowardice with the name of Ahimsa).

As a higher value of life, Ahimsa is to realize the fundamental truth that Atma (the soul, the self) is imperishable, immutable. Not to strive for realization of this fundamental truth is Himsa.

(ii) As a human worth, Satya is to state faithfully but intelligently what one's unimpaired, healthy sense-organs convey. It is truthfulness.

Not to state correctly what the healthy sense-organs convey is an untruth. It is a wrong use of the sense-organs. Misuse begets injury; an untruth affects their competence. That is why it is not desirable to tell lies.

As a higher value of life, Satya is to realize that all that is there emanates from God.

(iii) As a human worth, Asteya is to refrain from stealing. It is not to covet what is legitimately not ours.

As a higher value of life, Asteya is to strive for self- realization.

(iv) As a human worth, Brahmacharya is not to allow one's mind to associate sex-feelings with any other person except one's own spouse.

Generally speaking, Brahmacharya is to humanize the brutality of an inordinate desire-desire not only for sex but also for revenge, inordinate gain, etc.

As a higher value of life, it is to follow the path of God- realization.

(v) As a human worth, Kshama is to forgive and to let go. It is forbearance, to have patience and be self-controlled when subjected to annoyance or provocation.-To make allowance for the failings of others makes it easier to forgive. Thinking from the point of view of the offending person gives you a better understanding of an explosive situation.

As a higher value of life, Kshama is to be truly human and given to humane living.

(vi) As a human worth, Dhriti-the operative part of the mind-is individual volition with a difference. It is the will to endeavour and to persevere in one's effort till the objective is achieved. It is the intention in which is inherent the initiative and the perseverance (for self-fulfilment) as one integrated whole.

As a higher value of life, Dhriti is to realize: Aham Brahma asmi, I AM That, the Imperishable, THAT AM I is a fact of life.

(vii) As a human worth, Daya is compassion. It is kindliness and forbearance.

As a higher value of life, Daya is to realize God being Omnipresent, Kindly and Charitable.

(viii) As a human worth, Arjava is to be upright. It is to be straightforward in speech, dealings and deeds. It is to be candid, fair and frank.

As a higher value of life, Arjava is the spirit of friendliness. (ix) As a human worth, Mitahara is moderation in eating. It is to eat to live. To live to eat is gluttony.

(Fasting is not essential unless advised by a doctor. I would suggest regular habits and an occasional change of diet. Relish whatever you eat. Let eating be a pleasure and not a task.)

(x) As a human worth, Shaucha is purity of the mind and the body. Meditation takes care of the heart and the mind. Regular habits and the sense of cleanliness take care of the body.

As a higher value of life, it is the purity of the heart and the mind.

The second step is NIYAMA: It enjoins: (i) Tapah (तपाह), (ii) Santosha (संतोष), (iii) Daana (दान), (iv) Astikyata (अस्तिकता), (v) Ishvara Parayanata (ईश्वर परायणता), (vi) Siddhanta Vakya Shravana (सिद्धान्त वाक्य श्रवण), (vii) Hari (हरी), (viii) Mati (मति), (ix) Japa (जाप), (x) Vrata (व्रत).

(i) As a human worth, Tapah is to do penace meaingfully. No meaningless austarity, self-denial, nor any senseless self- torture. It is to strive for self-fulfilment and self-realization. Tapah gets a meaning and a purpose only when a creative urge, the soul-force, impels man to take to it.

As a higher value of life, Tapah is to ponder over and to aspire to solve the eternal question-the meaning and the purpose of being.

(ii) As a human worth, Santosha is to feel contented with. whatever an honest effort earns. It is to be grateful for whatever God grants. A contented person avoids hurry and scurry and the unnecessary stress and strain.

As a higher value, Santosha is to accept God's will being supreme. THY WILL BE DONE-an honest acceptance of this maxim is Santosha.

(iii) As a human worth, Daana is to share with the less fortunate what you get or what you have got-even if sharing is a hardship. It is to perform benevolent actions for the needy-with no expectations of a material reward. Something inspired by a spirit of social justice is worth taking to.

As a higher value of life, it is to be of a charitable disposition.

Given the choice, I would prefer charity to poverty. A poor man has nothing to share. A saint once blessed a devotee thus: "May God bless you with a son who should be neither

a king nor a saint but a wealthy person with a charitable disposition. Both the king and the saint will then knock at his door for aid.'

(iv) As a human worth, Astikata is to have a firm belief in the goodness of man. Trust begets trust. It is to value and respect the human worths and values.

As a higher value of life, it is faith in God-implicit, abiding and soul-stirring. As such, it is a noble aspiration.

(v) As a human worth, Ishvara Parayanata is to obey and to have confidence in the wisdom of God and His prophets.

As a higher value of life, it complements Astikata. It is to have faith in God and be devoted to Him. Man cannot be left to his own devices, nor allowed to drift aimlessly. Let deep, even blind, faith in the Omnipotence of God be his moorings-his mainstay.

(vi) As a human worth, Siddhanta Vakya Shravana is to know the fundamental truths of life that man should live by. As a higher value, it is clairvoyance, anubhava (अनुभव), the Voiceless Voice-a good choice worth aspiring after.

(vii) As a human worth, Hri is to be careful about something being proper or improper. It is natural urge to be virtuous. Because of it man finds it difficult to commit a sin*.

Neither always defy the norms, nor be too much afraid of the opinions of others. It is sane and sober to act right and to repent if anything turns out to be wrong.

In the absence of a right guidance, it is difficult to say whether something is right or wrong. An unfounded guilt- consciousness becomes a health problem. So great care should be taken while practising Hri. Have a robust good faith in the goodness of man and the benevolence of the Lord.

(viii) As a human worth, Mati is to judge rightly and to act accordingly. It is the right initiative and a right sense of direction and purpose. It is a sincere desire to do what is right.

As a higher value of life, Mati resolves a crisis of commitment, courage and faith and also rehabilitates man physically, mentally, morally and spiritually.

• To me the word sin means a human failing-nothing more, nothing less. Unless man is made to feel being responsible for his actions, he will always blame Satan for misleading him.

Mati helps man to find his true identity and his true vocation too. Most of the unaccounted-for-restlessness and misery is due to sometimes man being a misfit in life.

Which way to turn is often man's dilemma. A wrong turning may spell trouble. Make Mati your way of life and avoid going astray.

(ix) As a human worth, Japa is to recite a Mantra* or a prayer for some time. Usually the recitation is in a tone so low that no one else can hear it.

Once a person transcends the mind, japa automatically becomes manana (मनन), a higher value of life.

(x) As a human worth, Vrata is to commit oneself to a religious act. It helps man to unravel his mind's inherent powers.

To commit oneself to act, even against one's own nature, is what distinguishes man from the beast. As such it is a higher value of life.

ASANA: Primarily, it is to sit cross-legged on the floor. The head, the neck and the spinal cord are kept straight.

Asana puts you in a proper frame of mind for the yoga sadhana**. It becomes more helpful when one can sit steady for long in that posture.

One should not however worry about asana too much. Just as water finds its level, proper asana suggests itself. That is my experience. Some of the asanas that I practised on my own-I read about them much later.

Vira, Siddha, Padnia and Sukha-usually these are the four asanas for meditation. Take up any one of them for sadhana. Brisk walks and keeping regular hours ensure good health. Pranayama as a physical exercise keeps man fit and active. It brings a natural charming glow to his face.

Yoga as a system of physical exercise is commendable. It is a science of life that not only animates but also rejuvenates.

• That which when recited or contemplated gives a sense of destiny and a sense of repose-is the mantra.

** In the present context, sadhana is to practise yoga. And a sadhaka is one who does sadhana.

It promotes good health-and helps man feel young. It releases cosmic energy to develop human potentialities. And it heals when someone is sick. Many physical ailments can be treated successfully by Yoga-therapy.

This system of taking exercise teaches the know-how of deep relaxation. This deep relaxation is vital for the hard- pressed man of today. I may specifically mention Shava Asana. It is the best tranquilizer there is.

PRANAYAMA: Primarily it is to control breath through Puraka, Kumbhaka and Rechaka. Puraka is to inhale. Kumbhaka is to hold the breath after inhalation or exhalation. Rechaka is to exhale.

The operative part of Pranayama is Kumbhaka-the vital pause. The duration of the vital pause is to be gradually increased.

By practising Pranayama, man can control the mind and the sense-organs to some extent. It is a natural way of soothing shattered nerves and relieving tension. In these days of inordinate rush and crush, it is essential as a regular way of life. Besides improving health, it helps man to develop the extra-sensory perceptions (E.S.P.).

Pranayama = Prana + Ayama.

Prana* is the breath of life. It is the vital principle of life. Ayama is to control, to expand or to extend.

Thus Pranayama (Prana + Ayama) is to control Prana and develop its potentialities. As an integrated yoga sadhana, it leads to spiritual growth and self-realization. In that case, its field becomes wider. Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana and Dhyana integrate themselves into one single sadhana.

PRATYAHARA, as a human worth, gives a direction to the mind and restrains it from following its own impudent whims.

As a higher value of life, it tends to stop an aimless drift at any level. At one time, I felt tempted to bracket it with Niyamas. Later, I let it companion Dharana-the spiritual stance. They complement each other.

* Prana is also the ultimate of matter. What fills space is prana. But in the present context it is the breath of life.

Pratyahara is to rally all that is good in man and to set it against the disruptive forces of life.

Now DHARANA, DHYANA and SAMADHI are the three elements of one single process of meditation* Dharana is to concentrate on an object. Unity of the mind with its object by contemplation is Dhyana. Both Dharana and Dhyana result in-to be more precise-culminate in SAMADHI.

Let me say it all over again: Yama and Niyama govern our behaviour. They give to our lives a right sense of direction and a strong sense of responsibility.

Asana as a meditative pose helps concentration. Just as lying flat on the back is a natural pose for sleeping, an asana is the proper pose for meditation. There is something vital in asana. It helps conserve, augment too, the vital elements of life that are released during the process of Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi.

Pranayama and Pratyahara are to man what its banks are to a river. Just as the two banks restrict, restrain and help the river to flow on to the sea, similarly the pranayama and pratyahara restrict, restrain and help man to move on to Greater Life.

Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama and Pratyahara-as one integrated whole-prepare the ground for Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi. Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi-in

*To illustrate how Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi are related: The hallowed river Yamuna flows on till the holy Ganga joins it at Sangam, a place of pilgrimage near Allahabad (India). Here, according to the legend, a subterranean current Saraswati surfaces-only to be merged into the joint stream of Ganga and Yamuna. Hereafter the three together flow on to the sea-the ultimate.

Now Dharana (the hallowed river Yamuna) 'flows on' till Dhyana (the holy river Ganga) joins it at Sangam, the ecstatic state of the mind that has transcended dvandvas (द्वन्द्व), the pairs of opposites i.e., happiness and unhappiness etc. Here Samadhi (the sacred subterranean current Saraswati) rises from underneath the surface-consciousness and merges into the joint mainstream of Dharana and Dhyana. Hereafter Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi flow on as one integrated dhriti (धृति) to the Ultimate. This integrated dhriti may as well be termed as yoga- urge.

their turn-condition man to aspire for self-fulfilment and self-realization.

A seeker learns many new things from a saintly person that might otherwise not occur to him at all.

PART IV

Nathji

As light and shadow play hide and seek with each other over a pastoral landscape so it appears to be with the human mind-trivial nothings are followed by depths of profundity, depression and lethargy by enthusiasm and an upsurge of a strange undefinable joy. At one moment life appears to be a mere process of existing, at another it seems pregnant with meaning too deep to fathom. Whether this process is unending, or whether it follows an upward spiral-I have not been able to discover.

(DR.) KARAN SINGH

1. THE MIND

OM! The Mind: The Sanskrit word for it is manas (मनस) the usage of which is manah (मनः) and its corrupted form is just mana (मन). Whether it is Sankhya, Vedanta, Nyaya or Yoga school of thought, manah is a dimension of the antahkarana-an inner 'organ' as compared to the physical body. The mind is both empirical and transcendental. It has five dimensions:

(i) Samkalpa: It is volition, a wish, an intention, determination, a resolve. It is to will, fancy, imagine, to think.

(ii) Vikalpa: It is to doubt, waver, hesitate, even err.

(iii) Murchha: It is insensibility-it is lack of feeling. It is apathy, indifference, an emotional blackout.

(iv) Jadata: It is a feeling of dullness. It is to be confused or baffled. It is to be stunned, stupefied. It is not being able to grasp, at any one time, the meaning of anything.

The above given four dimensions are that of the empirical mind.

Manana (4) comes to the share of the transcendental mind. It is to meditate on the transcendental values of life. It is reflective thinking.

Again; the mind can count, compute, calculate, estimate, enumerate, and it can figure out things. It can gauge, measure, probe, assess and appraise. It desires, wishes, cherishes, loves. It is swayed by likes and dislikes. It is also capable of hatred. It provokes hatred. It shows displeasure. It provokes displeasure. It reacts favourably. It

reacts violently. It recoils. It shirks responsibility. It gets readily involved. It discriminates and is capable of distinguishing one object from another.

The mind is agile, quick-quick as lightning, volatile. It is as well fickle, erratic, wavering, wayward. It feels strongly about things. It can ignore if an occasion demands.

It not only feels, but knows what it feels. It not only strives but knows why it strives. It not only knows but knows what it knows. In short, mind has the power to observe what goes on in man's own mind.

The mind is subtle. It can be known only when it manifests itself in any one of its many phenomena.

The mind takes cognizance of objects in such rapid succession that it appears to have done it simultaneously. In reality it does not. It is like piercing a hundred petals of a flower by a spear-the petals are pierced in fact one after another.

We cannot possibly ascertain or determine the working of the mind. We can behold it not, nor help anyone else view it. Paradoxically, it itself is the means to cognize itself.

Here are the six mantras of Yajurveda, the most ancient literature on the mind-and the most revealing. I know no better description of the mind!

I

यज्जाग्रतो दूरमुदैति दैवं तदु सुप्तस्य तथैवैति।

दूर ङ्ग ज्योतिषां ज्योतिरेकं तन्मे मनः शिवसंकल्पमस्तु॥

That which sleeps not while I sleep, that which transcends and sweeps past the barriers of space and time-and that which initiates and activates my sense-organs-may that mind of mine entertain auspicious thoughts only.

II

येन कर्माण्यपसो मनीषिणो यऐ कृण्वन्ति विदथेषु धीशः ।

यदपूर्वं यक्षमन्तः प्रजानां तन्मे मनः शिवसंकल्पमस्तु॥

Whereby the wise and the learned, the men of goodwill and noble deeds are initiated and directed to think and act sublime in a spirit of valour, love and sacrifice-and that which

is a unique dimension of Antahkarana (अन्त : करण, the mental body)-may that mind of mine cherish noble ideas only.

III

यत्प्रज्ञानमुत चेतो धृतिश्च यज्ज्योतिरन्तरमृतं प्रजासु।
यस्मान्न ऋते किंचन कर्म क्रियते तन्मे मनः शिवसंकल्पमस्तु ॥

That which is an imperishable phenomenon of the inner organ (Antahkarana)-that which cognizes and is cognition as well-that which rouses, moves and makes man a creative, a purposeful and a growing phenomenon of life— that whereof Dhriti* is a dimension without which nothing

* Dhriti is an important dimension of the mind. It is individual volition with a difference. It is the will to endeavour and to persevere in one's effort till the objective is achieved. It is the intention which inheres in it initiation, initiative, perseverence and fulfilment as one integrated whole.

According to the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, Dhriti is one of the dimensions of the mind:

कामः संकल्पो विचिकित्सा श्रद्धाऽश्रद्धा।
धृतिर् अ-धृतिर् हीर् भीर् इत्येतत् सर्वं मनः ॥

(बृ० 69.1.3)

Kamah, Samkalpa, Samshaya (quest), Shraddha, Ashraddha, Dhriti, Adhriti, Lajja (modesty), Buddhi, Bhaya-these are the ten dimensions of the mind.

can be accomplished-may that mind of mine cognize and initiate what is correct and right.

IV

येनेदं भूतं भुवनं भविष्यत्परिगृहीतममृतेन सर्वम्।
येन यज्ञस्तायते सप्तहोता तन्मे मनः शिवसंकल्पमस्तु ॥

That inevitable phenomenon which inheres and in which is involved the awareness* of all that was, is and will be- and that which is immanent in and identified with the

* It is this aspect of the mind which can easily explain the phenomena of clairvoyance, clairaudience, spiritual or otherwise revelations etc. I can speak from personal experience. Sometimes, I just read out a page from what my own mind displays, and it turns out to be somebody's tale. There is no divinity as such involved in this phenomenon. It is a normal function of the mind at a certain level.

It is just touching the right point and the mind unburdens itself. Of course, man cannot will it as and when he chooses. There are other factors involved in this phenomenon. Man should himself rise to a stature where he can make the mind lay bare the past, the present, the future.

In my early days of Sadhana, I dabbled in spiritism (to communicate with the spirits of the dead), as well. An enthusiast of this "science" once saw me doing Sadhana in a temple standing in the cremation grounds. He thought I was doing Sadhana for the attainment of some supernatural powers and offered to initiate me. At first, I felt cncouraged by the results. After exhaustive experimentation and long reflection, however, I came to a definite conclusion-it is some faculty of man himself which when awakened works and reveals. No spirit or Jiv-atma (जीव-आत्मा) is involved in it. Later, however, I realized that it is a dimension of the mind; no separate faculty, sense-organ or any other extraneous factor makes these 'revelations' possible. It is an aspect of the mind that works and there is nothing supernatural about it. Mind is the "culprit", catch it. It took me long time to realize this wonderful characteristic of the human mind.

So far as the evil spirits are concerned, that is a different affair. It has nothing to do with the mind. It is an individual's own experience. Unless someone experiences it, it is just a fairytale-one man's word against another. Those who experience it, believe it, others may or may not.

This is the subject that has never appealed to me, however. I have never tried to look into it.

seven-fold human organism*-may this mind of mine be always contemplating good and thinking high.

V

यस्मिन्नृचः साम यजूंषि यस्मिन्प्रतिष्ठिता रथनाभाविवाराः ।

यस्मिंश्चित्त् सर्वमोतं प्रजानां तन्मे मनः शिवसंकल्पमस्तु ॥

That which is a dimension divine of the Ultimate Truth**-that whereunto the Ultimate Truth is revealed- that which reveals the Truth Absolute as a human experience-and that whereof the cosmos and the cosmic mind are as the warp and the woof are that of a texture-may this mind of mine contemplate as God wills.

VI

सुषारथिरश्वानिव यन्मनुष्यान्नेनीयतेऽभीषुभिर्वाजिन इव ।

हृत्प्रतिष्ठं यदजिरं जविष्ठं तन्मे मनः शिवसंकल्पमस्तु ॥

That which is absolute and cannot be contained-that which moves and directs man's footsteps aright when it bates and pervades the heart (that is to say, when it is under control, sublimated and humanized)-may this mind of mine reflect, cogitate and deliberate essentially right.

According to the Philosophy of Gorakh Nath the human organism consists of:-

(i) Bhuta-pinda, the physical body.

(ii) Antahkarana-panchaka, the mental body.

(iii) Kula-panchaka, five-fold Kula.

(iv) Vyakti-panchaka, five-fold Vyakti.

(v) Pratyaksha-karana-panchaka.

(vi) Nadi-samsthana-the nervous system.

(vii) Dasha-Vayu-the ten vital forces (Prana-vayu).

These are the seven architects of human individuality. These are the seven performers (होता, hotas) of the Yajna-living an individual life.

** The literal translation of this mantra is:

Wherefrom Rks (Rigveda), Samans (Samveda) and Yajus (Yajurveda) radiate as do the spokes of a wheel from its nave-wherein the cosmic mind and the cosmos are interwoven-may this mind of mine entertain good thoughts only.

2. CHITTA-VRITTI-A HUMAN PHENOMENON

OM! Aspirant! Here is a bird on the wing. Mystic straggler that it is! Untouched by the mind, it comes straight from the heart of Time-Infinite, Sublime.

The mystic straggler seems to come from nowhere. The mind's eye catches a glimpse of it, but soon after loses sight of it. Still, it stays long enough to quicken the mind-stuff. The quickened mind-stuff metamorphoses and takes the form of the straggler that actuated it. Transmuted thus the straggler takes the form of a chitta-vritti.

The chitta-vritti is a human phenomenon ready to live man's life with him.

Seeker! It is the chitta-vritti that walks in and eggs man on to go to the market place where the mind's progeny-the activated thoughts-are out to sell their wares.

Behold! Here they are dressing the show-windows with elaborate care. The display is to attract your attention and allure you into buying something. You may or may not but they are there to entertain you.

You stand and stare wistfully-with your nose pressed hard against the window-glass! It hurts-as a craving would.

The activated thoughts know their job and are good at it. They smile you into entertaining them.

Come back home-the heart-the cradle of the gods. Better desire sparingly and that too not unnecessarily.

Come on, sir. Let us be on the lookout for some holy stragglers-the thoughts that truly inspire. For that we need a time of quiet. God is essentially an affair of the heart, as His love is!

In the everyday language it is like this: Whatever comes to mind, man wants to express it in words. The expression is speech but what comes in the mind is a chitta-vritti-the phenomenon of a human mind. OM!

3: CHITTA-VRITTI ENUNCIATED

अश्विनी मननप्राया भरणी विषय भर्तृता।

कृत्तिका च फलाकांक्षाऽकृतकार्येऽपि वाञ्छिता॥

विषयारोहिता पश्चाद् रोहिणीति निगद्यते।

मृगशिराश्चञ्चलता मृग्यते स्वे भिदाकृते॥

आर्द्रा त विषयासक्तिः रसांशेऽपि रसभ्रमः।

पुनर्वसुश्च प्रथिता विषयान्तरसक्तितः।।

पुष्ये तु पोषणीयः स्यात्तृप्तेः कामः प्रफुल्लितः।

आश्लेषा विषयश्लष्टा कामना या विवर्द्धिता।।

मघा प्रसन्नता ज्ञेया फाल्गुनी च विरक्तता।

सा द्विधा प्रोच्यते चाद्याऽशुभाप्यन्या घृणात्मिका।।

हस्ते सामूहिकी तृष्णा चित्रायां न सुनिश्चितिः।

स्वात्यां त्वसिधारावन्नित्या नित्यविवेकिता॥

विशाखायां भवेद्याच्या स्वीयतः स्वीयमण्डले।

साफल्यं त्वन्नाधायां ज्येष्ठायां च महीयते।।

मूले मूलोपलब्धिः स्यान्मूलाविद्या विनाशिता।

आषाढायां ध्वनेराशा सा द्विधा चोच्यते पुनः।।

प्रथमाऽऽसवासिका ज्ञेया कृतकार्या द्वितीयका॥

अभिजिति प्रसन्नायाः प्रसादो जायते क्वचित्।।

श्रवणे श्रुतीनां श्रवणं धनिष्ठायां च धन्यता।

शतभिषायां नानात्वविधूलिका विभीषिका॥

भाद्रपदा सोमलब्धिर्भद्रता सा द्विधेरिता।

पूर्वा त सहजा ज्ञेया-उत्तरा च निरंकशा॥

रेवती च मदोन्मत्ता स्वीयानन्दविघूर्णिता।

एतासु ग्रहसञ्चारः सौम्यास्ताः कथिताः सदा।।

Sanskrit text: (Courtesy Late Shri Narayan Swamiji Maharaj of Muzaffar Nagar, U.P.)

OM! Aspirant! Here are listed the 28 chitta-vrittis* that make the human mind a phenomenon of life, ready to live man's life with him:

1. Ashvini (अश्विनी) is deep thinking. It's to deliberate, contemplate, meditate, ponder over. It's to cogitate, to apply one's mind. It is to be engrossed in any thought or action.

2. Bharani (भरनी) is to tempt, to allure. It's a desire to indulge in sensual pleasures. It is to be influenced by deep-rooted desires (वासना).

3. Krittika (कृतिका) is to keep self-interest foremost. It is to think in terms of only the personal gain in all that one does.

4. Rohini (रोहिणी) is to desire, want or aspire after. It is love for all that edifies and essentially exalts.

5. Mrigashirsha (मृगशीर्ष) is to go on desiring time and time again. It's to flirt with one idea or another. It's what keeps the human mind running after one thing or another.

6. Ardra आर्द्रा) gives to sense-urges full sway over man's mind. It is attachment with worldly pleasures.

7. Punarvasu (पुनर्वसु) is the grabbing habit. It's to have too many irons in the fire. It is a desire to get more, even though there is enough already.

8. Pushya (पुष्य) is an ever growing desire for happiness. It fires man's imagination and he freely aspires to be in bliss.

9. Ashlesha (आश्लेषा) is to yearn for one thing or the other- having not the least desire to abstain.

10. Magha (मघा) is to feel contented and be happy. It is a sense of fulfilment.

11. Purva Phalguni (पूर्वा फाल्गुनी) is to shirk responsibility because of some selfish motive.

• Here the name given to each vritti is the same as that of a nakshatra (नक्षत्र). The moon is the nakshatr-raj (नक्षत्र-राज). Whether there is anything common between the mind, the Nakshatras, and the chitta-vrittis, I cannot say.

However, Shri Narayan Swamiji who gave me the Sanskrit text felt that there definitely was a relation between the mind and the moon. A good subject for study, I feel.

12. Uttara Phalguni (उत्तरा फाल्गुनी) is to shirk responsibility because of malice, hatred.

13. Hasta (हस्त) is a noble sentiment. It's to rise above selfish gain and to wish for the good of the family, community and the world at large. It's the spirit of sacrifice. It's to be of a charitable disposition. It is to identify oneself with a group and to work for its well-being. It's a wish to do selfless social work.

14. Chitra (चित्रा) is to be fickle-minded. It's to dilly-dally, hesitate and delay matters unnecessarily. It is to be irresolute, half-hearted and always drifting. Man finds it difficult to make a decision because of being moved by one impulse or another.

15. Svati (स्वाति) is viveka (विवेक). It's to discriminate between the perishables and the Imperishable. It's what tells what belongs to God and what is mundane. It's a religious bent of mind. It sets man on the Path-the eternal quest. It is to know what is what and what is truly good for man.

16. Vishakha (विशाखा) is something that is not proper for man to do. It is to desire everything for oneself. It is to be ambitious.

17. Anuradha (अनुराधा) is to wish for success and to work for it. Naturally nobody likes to fail in what one undertakes to accomplish.

18. Jyeshtha (ज्येष्ठ) is a person's desire for recognition. Man wants to be appreciated, praised and honoured. It's to feel elated and behave in a superior manner. It is the opposite of inferiority complex.

19. Mula (मुला) is to go deeper into things that matter. It's to follow the spirit and not the form while questing. It is to investigate with a view to find out the root cause. It is to be guided by the intrinsic worth of a thing and not being casual. It's to get rid of the basic ignorance and to arrive at the truth. It is what inspires man to quest for the Ultimate Truth.

20. Purva Ashadha (पूर्वाषाढ़ा) is to try to be worthy of another person's trust. It is to win the confidence of others and let them know it also.

21. Uttara Ashadha (उत्तराषाढ़) is not only an intention to succeed but also the desire is there to broadcast it. It is to be fully determined to achieve what one cherishes.

22. Abhijit* (अभिजीत) is to seek God's grace. It's a desire to please someone superior to get a reward. It is to propitiate a deity, some god or a goddess in the hope of being granted a boon. It is to act nobly because one's own religion or some other sacred tradition demand it.

23. Shravana (श्रवण) is not to apply one's mind but to believe in rumours, any hearsay. As well, it is to hear attentively what others say.

24. Dhanishtha (धनिष्ठा) is Dhanyata (धान्यता). It's a desire to be blessed for any good deed done. It is to seek fame, glory and to be a celebrity.

25. Shatbhisha (शतभिषा) is to try to resolve the differences. It's to broaden the area of agreement. It's to have a balanced view about things.

26. Purva Bhadrapada (पूर्व भाद्रपद) is to behave not because of fear or out of regard for someone, but because it is one's own innate desire or sentiment. It is to have the sublimity of character and nobility of behaviour as a way of life. It is to be good natured-fair and frank.

27. Uttara Bhadrapada (उत्तरा भाद्रपद) is to think and act independently. It is to act as one wishes or likes according to one's own Light.

28. Revati (रेवती) is divine ecstasy. It's unalloyed joy.

4. HERE IS YOUR MAN

OM! Here is your man, dear aspirant. He is human enough to feel and respond to one impulse or another. One

* Some regard Abhijit as a Star, but in authentic astrological literature it is Muhurat (24 minutes time from 11.48 A.M. to 12.12 P.M.) when gods accept prayer easily.

desire or another moves him. One motive or another prompts him and gets him going.

That's what your man is: raw, unwrought-ready to be moulded in any form. Cast him in a heroic and a noble mould or in a despicable and an obscure one; it's up to you.

1. He is easily excited. He is apt to be moved by one impulse or another. Can't the impulse be to do good?

2. He is hammered by deep-rooted desires and is constantly resisting the temptation to succumb to them. That's fine. Help him fight the evil tendencies. Give him moral and spiritual support.

3. He is desiring gratification of sense-desires, always lusting for power and plenty. Why not spiritual power and lots of goodwill for all? Please tell him that.

4. He is always thinking of ways and means to attain what he desires. Let him desire sublimity of character and goodness of heart and be blessed.

5. Sometimes he works himself into full fury to achieve what he cherishes the most. Fully determined is he. Let him follow the righteous path and be determined not to go astray.

6. Sometimes he goes on brooding, waiting for the time to come when he can fulfil a long-cherished desire. Simple enough, let the long-cherished desire be exalted.

7. Here is he planning and preparing himself to go into action. Why not something for the good of all?

8. He is endeavouring hard to achieve whatever he had in mind. Take care lest he should have something ignoble in mind.

9. What's it? Despite failure, he is persevering and is adamant to go on struggling. Let him struggle for God-realization.

10. Look! He is out to do anything that his dharma or any other command demands. Why doesn't he take to the path of service and sacrifice?

11. He is not an angel. He errs because he is human. Let us appeal to his vanity. Let his vanity not allow him to stoop low.

12. What a pity! He is burning with envy. He is full of hatred and malice. He might have some grudge against somebody. Why not against evil and an evil-doer?

13. Is he really your man? Why should he be so very conceited? Why talk of humility? He will not relish it. Let him pride himself upon his honesty and be truthful and honest in life.

14. Is your man now trying to put somebody off his guard? See, he is trying to create a false impression about himself. He wants to show off. Let him do good to others and pretend he didn't do it.

15. You did well to ignore him. But he is not mending his ways. He is telling all sorts of lies to serve some purpose. For once, allow him to tell a lie to save a critical situation-even somebody's life.

16. Despite hard knocks your friend doesn't lose heart nor hope. Who knows-God may one day bless him with success?

17. God has been kind to our friend. But he wants more and more because the demon of greed has taken him. Why not let him grab all that is good in life?

18. Here, your friend's mind seems to be preoccupied. Is he after some particular sensual pleasure? He is really making a concerted effort this time. What if the striving were for the heavenly bliss?

19. Oh! What a change! Our friend is fired by an ambition. I don't want to pry into his heart. But I do wish him to have an ambition for serving the poor and the needy.

20. There is something wrong somewhere. Our friend seems to have wished far too much. He is hoping against hope. He is living in a fool's paradise. Can't he strive for the Ultimate Truth that transcends all that is?

21. Why? Is it that your man is dumb? No he is not. Now he is talking for talking's sake. Let him sit down, ponder deep and aspire to talk to God.

22. That's fine. Now our friend doesn't talk without purpose. There is some greatness about the thoughts he expresses. May God bless him.

23. Great indeed! Our friend is already in a state of trance. He is aglow with the heavenly pride. He is talking as if he is relaying what he is envisioning. There is a dynamic change in his disposition. He is a changed person altogether. Look! The heavenly glow is spreading across his whole being. God is great! Isn't our friend walking with God?

24. Hush! Let us tiptoe out. He is lost in a reverie divine. He is in a state of exalted creative quietude. A miracle. Our friend is surging forward to give a new stance to his trend. ....Admire him.

25. Where is our man? He was there. But now he is nowhere? He is everywhere. I feel him in my heart. My heart is athrill and charmed. A surprise! But where is he? And where is He-the Ultimate. ....

Seeker! All the twenty-five phenomena narrated above form an integral part of man's personality. Instead of spreading out to confront each and every phenomenon severally, it is better by far to face the personality itself and try to re-form it. Let there be re-thinking. Let us re-orientate and re-direct our individuality and its phenomena will follow the lead. We will think aright, act aright and speak aright-once our personality turns good-Godwards! OM!

The svabhava (distinctive feature, essence, specificness, स्वभाव) of the universe is change. Vishva parivartansheel hai, Parivartan is kha svabhava hai (विश्व परिवर्तनशील है। परिवर्तन इसका स्वभाव है). The essence of change is a crisis-preceding it and following it. This eternal process of change and crisis is the phenomenon of creation.

5. MIND, FAITH, HEART, WILL

OM! The mind! Well, what's there about it that you cannot manage? You can brood as you like, think as you will.

Thoughts make or mar a man. Let the good thoughts help him to a nobler life. Think good. Think divine. Think sublime. Think joy. Think bliss. Think virtue and think of eschewing violence.

We think too much of the mind and make it a problem, while it is not. You can always manage it. Be disciplined yourself and the mind will behave.

All work and no play makes the mind dull. Let the mind relax. It relaxes best in meditation. Let noble thinking inspire. Meet good people and hear what they say. Or read their writings and be inspired. Let Pratyahara of the Eightfold Path of Yoga give a right stance to your life. Let Pranayama help develop the mind's potential and take care of its trends.

It's a layman's way to a pretty successful living.

Let the faith be your strength but never a mere wooden crutch. Do not lean on it too often, too much. You might lose initiative and the strength of your will.

Human faith should not be allowed to defeat the purpose of life and its imperative-both the creative effort and the soulful aspirations. They have their own role to play in life.

Despite faith, if something doesn't go the way you want it to, it is because God has something else in view.

The heart? You have a wonderful heart. It is the human heart that is capable of compassion, love and sacrifice.

What the mind often fails to know, man's heart comprehends. The heart? It is not the one that throbs in your breast, but it is that which is a heartthrob of the soul-force within.

The will? Man is not yet in the know of its potential. Usually we bracket it with the mind. As a human value, it accomplishes the most difficult tasks. Will is the soul-force in action. It is a challenge to apathy and indolence.

Whatever the organ through which the will works-either it is as yet unfinished or man is not fully aware of it. The will-power metamorphoses man. It's no coincidence that all the great men and women are endowed with deep faith and a strong will. In them, the faith and the will-power complement each other. Because of their integrated drive the achievement is greater.

Let us resolve to have faith in God to augment our will to live. The vivacity and the verve of the thus augmented faith is a boon worth aspiring after. OM!

6. YOU COMPLAIN YOU CANNOT CONCENTRATE

OM! You complain: you can neither concentrate nor meditate-the mind wanders. The mind is the biggest stumbling-block-little hope to go far in the field of contemplation. That is your difficulty. But it is a common complaint.

How to tackle this problem? Either the mind is inanimate* or it is not. If it is inanimate, the movement in it is not its own. Some external force keeps it going. Withdraw that force and the mind will come to rest, when the momentum is spent out.

As you pedal, you set in motion the wheels of a bicycle. in Stop pedalling to stop the wheels. A stone in your hand hurts only when you hurl it at me. The proverbial storm in the tea cup calms down when the cup is left alone.

Hence, if the mind is inanimate, the force that keeps it going is to be spotted and tackled. No need to bother about the mind. Like the stone in your hand, you can drop it at any time. If the mind is not inanimate, it is an animated force. Force is indestructible. That is the law. To render the mind

* Influenced or acted upon without exerting influence, or acting in return. Inactive but acted upon. Inert.

ineffective is not possible. It goes on functioning as long as man lives. Let it function normally unless we want to go mad. In that case, probably, it works in circles. Life is then no better than death.

Friend! there must be a way out. And there is! To my mind it is the yoga way of life.

Practise Pranayama to command and control the mind and develop its capacity. Practise Pratyahara to give it a new sense of direction. Like the river that flows within its banks, a committed mind is needed at the time of meditation. For that you should practise Yama and Niyama of the Eightfold Path of Yoga.

Not that alone-there are other ways and ways and ways- an endless number of them.

Sit down anywhere, at any time, in any posture and just close your eyes. By thinking of something or the other activate your mind and give full expression to the suppressed desires, pent up feelings, and the played-down emotions. Neither set a pace for the mind nor for the heart at this stage. No meddling of any sort, nor any suggestions whatever. Let the things take their own course. Feel free and be at ease-no restraints whatsoever, nor provocations.

Soon after the mind had had its run, you will find it settling down. Not the lull before a storm, but it is a state of lull in the real sense.

For some time be in this state of lull. The mystic 'mindlessness' so brought about will start descending into a dynamic mindfulness. After this free-for-all sadhana, disturbing yourself the least, sit down in asana and 'stare' into the void.

First the muscles of the face will start relaxing. The eyes will then automatically close and you will be in Dhyana deep. This is the stage when the activated thoughts-chitta-

vrittis-start shrinking back within themselves. In the language of the mystics, the serpent (the Kundalini) gives up wriggling and lies still, with its tail in its mouth. The temptations lose their hold on the seeker's mind. He is either unaware of them or is not interested. The craving loses its sting.

Now is the twilight of partial-awareness that is conducive to deep meditation. Most of the sadhanas that you had been doing earlier remain the same, but now they become more meaningful.

Here you will, however, have to be careful about one thing. You might often lapse into a pleasant and comforting state of semi-consciousness. It is yoga-nidra (योग-निद्रा) that comes naturally as a pleasurable surprise at one time or another. When the hectic activities of the mind slow down, the sleep is then very deep and sweet. A boon in the present- day tensed up world, but not for the seekers, alas. They must keep nightlong vigils .... whenever needed.

Do your sadhana the way you like, but never let it be a mindless affair: It should not become mechanical, a sort of routine affair.

Sadhana is your individual affair-individually yours- and is unique. Translate it into prayers and meditation according to your inherent nature and the natural disposition.

There is no such thing like a made-to-order sadhana, howsoever much some teachers might claim. Just as you have to find your faith to find your God, you have to find your sadhana to progress on the way to self-realization. Please always remember that what is soil to a plant, faith is to you. What is speech to the man in his everyday life, the voice of silence is to the seeker in his life of sadhana.

Sincerity of purpose, plan and action makes man humble. A paradox? No. Man comes to know of his limitations and becomes aware of the difficulties that beset the Path.

7. IF THE MIND WERE A HORSE

OM! Aspirant! Imagine the mind as a horse; it is your mount. You are riding it. You are galloping fast in response to a call of Jijnyasa (जिज्ञासा), the urge to quest.

With feet held firmly in the "stirrups", (the phenomena of the universe) stop goading the "animal* within" with one lash or another. Quick gather the reins and rein it in. To rein

in the horse is Pranayama. The lash is one sensual pleasure or the other, one urge or another.

You have reached a wayside inn. It happens to be a long- forgotten, long-forsaken place. Its hinges creak as you force open a door.

You enter. The room is full of dust. It smells as would an inordinate lust. You see the cobwebs and the bats hanging from the rafters. Do not turn away in disgust lest you should have to spend the night out in the wilderness.

Open all the windows and all the doors for "ventilation".

Let the refreshing moonlight brighten up the eerie atmosphere. As you move about you stumble across a lamp. That's good. Take out a match-box from your "breast- pocket" and light it. An urge to quest always sets man aflame with a new urge and a new faith.

Here, take a broom. It should be somewhere around. Clean the floor, walls, ceiling, windows and the doors. Does the dust smother you? The lust also does the same.

Never mind the discomfort. Go ahead, and do a thorough job of it. Throw the dirt far away lest it should be blown in again by the lustful winds.

While cleaning, you stumble upon many many things lying burried underneath the refuse and the rubbish. That is like many a long-forgotten thing coming to mind when man sits down to do soul-searching.

How about the horse? Scrub it well for relaxation. Secure the horse and secure the door, lest you should lose a night's well-earned rest in search of it.

In the case of the mind, it relaxes best in meditation. Some asanas, certain mudras and a religious disposition do help. Japa-constant recitation or manana of a mantra-does not allow the mind to wander. (That is what makes japa a

Animal? A living being different from a plant in having the ability to move voluntarily, the presence of a nervous system and a greater ability to respond to stimuli, the need for complex organic materials for nourishment and the delimitation of cells usually by a membrane rather than a cellulose wall.

regular feature of sadhana till the mind is transcended.)

You had had a night's rest and are now ready for the journey ahead. You look around for someone to guide you.

"Is someone around?" You give out a call. Behold! A wise- looking person is coming. As the stranger approaches, the horse neighs and gets restless. (It seems to know its master.)

The man saddles up the horse, helps you to its back- walks it up and down and points the way. The horse trots off.

It is Pratyahara that gives a sense of direction.

While riding the galloping horse you sit up in the saddle-strangely wrought-up. Suddenly the animal stops. The end? No. Yet to go afar.

After walking it for a while, you urge the horse on. Restlessly it paws the ground and does not stir. You are nonplussed.

You look up and around, and you pray in all solemnity.

Not long after, you are pleasantly surprised to see Prajna (divine wisdom, प्रज्ञा) appearing on the scene. It comes, smiles and helps you dismount.

Now, fired by high hopes and fond predilections, you stand scouring the horizon for miraculous signs. Suddenly a huge mansion, standing in its own grounds, bursts into view. You walk up to its porch, leaving it to Prajna to take care of your mount.

You knock. Dharana opens the door of the mystic mansion, for you to discover its wonders.

To catch your eye the horse paws the ground. You look back. The idea of having left your mount behind sits heavy on your heart. You cannot help it however. Alas, what was a means so far, has now become a barrier.

You are in two minds. Either you retrace your steps or go ahead. Then and there the Prajna calls: "Go! The goal lies ahead of you.

Come on, sir. Have no compunctions. Let Dharana lead you on to the wonderous Dhyana-loka*

* Generally speaking Dhyana is to concentrate. In the present context, it is to go in for deeper contemplation so that higher forces of life come into play and get involved in the creative endeavour initiated by Dharana.

Here you are in Dhyana .... The trance-like state augurs well.

In the twilight of Dhyana, you sort of wait for the heavens to open up and let you glimpse the MOST HIGH. Suddenly a lightning flash blazes and you shudder. Your body quivers. You wonder. Another flash, and yet another. You ponder. You wonder. Suddenly it flashes before your mind's eye that it is the Kindly Light. That inspires a gladsome smile.

Hark! Isn't it Anahata Shabda*?

At first you hear one continuous murmur-so strange, so sweet. As you get lost in Dhyana, the murmur begins to jingle. The melodious jingle does challenge attention. It is nothing short of a heavenly melody that sounds like a miraculous ripple of conversation with God, the Benevolent Lord.

Of a sudden, a bang! Did something explode within? Oh, it was an intruding thought that had it hard. It had no business to trespass.

Now it is a new world of silence supreme that is being revealed.

Now it is dark. It is twilight; now the light is mellow. Now there is a flash that blazes across the horizons, quickly followed by a clap of thunder that seems to shake all and everything around.

Now the area of your vision is small. Now it extends itself afar. Now the stage is set for a strange mystic experience: From all over, the secrets of wooing the Unknown are being dinned into your ears. You try some but dismiss the rest with a shrug. You are in no mood to chase the fleeting phantoms. The blind faith seems to whisper: "Seek the One and Only and none else.

Oh, while writing I am finding it difficult to narrate the experiences. Maybe the age-old tradition that spiritual experiences should not be revealed to the uninitiated is coming in the way.

* Anahata Shabda is a spiritual experience that is known by experience alone.

Here you are in a strange new world. You are in the land of the Golden DAWNS (उषा).

The Golden Dawn? That is what is given the name Samadhi. Just as the dawn ushers in a new day, the state of Samadhi ushers in a whole world of new values.

The land of the Golden Dawns is alive with the presence of Masters, Siddha Purushas and the Jiwan-muktas*.

Seeker! Spiritual endeavour is a revealing experience. I may caution however. Just as one swallow does not make a summer, one or two of them won't essentially mean the end of your Quest. Of course they do usher you into one state of super-consciousness or another. OM!

Not Providence but our inordinate desire to possess mutilates our destiny. Asteya, a dimension of Yoga, is the remedy.

8. HOW TO TACKLE THE MIND

OM! What is it? The mind again?

Here is your child. He is in a playful mood; the naughty little one. Look away and let the child feel that you are not interested in what he is doing. Soon after the child will feel awkward, and will be in a chastened mood. Deal with the mind likewise!

Again; here is someone smiling bright to charm you. Show interest ever so little and the grin broadens. There is a merry twinkle in the eyes to excite you. But you are not interested in flirting. Look unconcerned and be so. The beguiler feels awkward and looks foolish. Slowly the grin turns into a sinister grimace. All charm is gone and everything looks ordinary.

Deal with the run-away mind likewise. Pay no attention to its flirtations. Left to itself the mind will shrink back within itself, leaving you to yourself.

*Liberated while still alive.

Will the mind become inactive? No, it will be very much alive and its still small voice (the conscience) will command henceforth. OM!

9. RELAXATION

OM! Aspirant! Sleep is a bodily condition-natural. That is what a layman should feel and would say. I need not define it, you sleep every day. The sleep that knows no end is death. Nobody is interested in a sleep like that. Let us talk about the one which refreshes, rehabilitates.

According to science, sleep is a normal function of the body. It's the body that goes to sleep-the sleep of the just (sound and fast). Sometimes, you might as well have a troubled sleep. Grieve not, for it is a part of life.

Deep sleep is wherein one neither desires, rages, nor entertains any dream. "Sleep", says Dr. Faure, "is a relaxation and man's reconciliation with a part of himself which seemed forgotten." Reconciliation is always a happy event, eases tension.

Normally, nobody worries about sleep. Friend, it is wiser to let "sleeping dogs" lie. Once you begin to worry and scurry you cannot sleep well.

Still, as already stated, it's the physical body that slumbers-maybe comfortably maybe not. While you sleep, your mind is active-up and doing. That's what you need be careful of. If the mind is more active than it ought to, it will not let the physical body rest. You may have to keep awake in spite of your dire need of relaxation. That is never a happy situation. Comfortably restful slumbers would help.

Again, not that the mind is not affected when one is tired. The physical fatigue is a drag-it takes the edge off the bodily functions. The mind is at a nonplus. It is dull, perplexed. That makes you slack, listless. True, the mind never gets tired as tiredness goes. But it often deviates and drifts. Coming to a definite conclusion becomes difficult.

That makes it hard to make decisions. Indecision in its turn mars the chances of success.

How to avoid the unfortunate situation mental fatigue lands you in?

Whenever fatigued or tensed up, relax adequately. The mind relaxes best in meditation. The meditation brings about a happy coordination between the mind, body and the Lord.

The second best method to soothe the tired nerves is rhythmic breathing-i.e., Pranayama. That results from regular meditation. Better breathe from deep down-no jerk, no violence done to the body.

As it is, sleep is a wonderful condition of the body and is essential for your emotional stability. That reminds me of the inevitable Gita: "Verily, Yoga is not for him who eats a lot more than needed, nor for him who would collapse from hunger. O, Arjuna, it is neither for him who sleeps too much or keeps awake too long.

An accomplishment like that adds a dimension sublime to this bodily condition, normally recurring every night and lasting several hours in which the nervous system is inactive, eyes are closed, muscles relaxed and consciousness nearly suspended.

How about the vigils that a yogi keeps? Why should he deny himself this life-giving vital wherewithal? Don't you know that yogic nidra (inspired sleep) helps him achieve a state of creative quietude-the Samadhi?

Samadhi? It takes its cue from and emanates from Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana and Dhyana of the Eightfold Path of Yoga. It is a state of meaningful lull and a purposeful creative drive too. (What sleep is to the physical body, Samadhi is to the spiritual self.) As a lull it caresses the body and soothes the nerves to make up the loss that man suffers because of the lack of sleep. As a creative urge Samadhi arouses man spiritually. An awakened self grows into a vital force that helps man to grow.

Seeker! Have proper rest and sleep adequately till timely creative quietude becomes an integral part of your life. OM!

If life were a game of cards-Providence has already dealt the cards. How you play, it's up to you. Providence plays fair.

10. LET EVIL ALONE

OM! Let me talk today of another "trinity" that governs all your actions-things done intentionally. You have to fight on three fronts to do things your way. Your intention comes first. Unless you cooperate with your resolves, nothing can be taken to. Adequate means at your command to do the job come next. Then it is a question of readily putting in the requisite effort. One link weak or missing, and the achievement is little.

When you want to do something exalted have the aforesaid essentials in a strong battle array-otherwise go slow and take your time to ponder. Howsoever loudly the evil might clamour heed it not. Refuse to be a party to anything that does wrong to somebody. Weaken your will to do mischief.

That is where religion would help. Fear of God or the shame of moral degradation should deter. Human justice might go astray, but Providence never forgets, never forgives. Sooner or later the sins do visit upon a sinner. The law of moral justice (Law of Karma) is no dead letter. It takes its course and never wavers.

Religion leads, it guides. It educates people to understand and be enlightened. Man begets a healthy aesthetic sense of morality. The spiritual awareness arouses in him a strong sense of justice and fair play. Evil tendencies get a setback.

Aspirant! Let evil alone. Live in spite of it. Do you ever refuse to travel simply because there is a thick jungle or a river on the way? Both the jungle and the river have their own role to play in life. Of course it differs from situation to situation and from person to person. You find your way despite the worst obstacles. Find your faith in spite of evil. It was a dacoit who became the cause of a welcome change in the saint Valmiki's life.

Let your intention be always God-inspired and noble. And the means employed should also be right and above board. Evil dare not trespass when man is guided by the higher values of life and is God-fearing. OM!

What inspirits the good, animates the evil as well. That accounts for man's failure to discredit evil. Unless man himself refuses to live evil-there is no other go.

11. HUMAN APPROACH ESSENTIAL

OM! Dear sir! Pray, do not run down man, nor always call him a sinner.

It is not proper to make the most of his mistakes and be- little his deeds of courage and valour. Man is essentially human. Have faith in the goodness of man.

Please rob him not of the praise whenever it's his due. Encourage him to be a worthy son of a worthy Father. He seldom fails to rise to the occasion whenever the need is.

Man has his heart in the right place and his thinking is sober and sane. A mistake here, a blunder there, and an unpleasant altercation elsewhere, only show that sometimes he is unwell. There is a whole world of difference between a sinner and a rabbid dog. It does not behove you to only condemn and not help him realize his mistake.

Honour where honour is due. That is what the Most High does when He descends into the hearts of men and women to revere a saint.

Aspirant! Leave the preacher alone to smoulder. You come away and ponder. Respond helpfully and responsibly.

Never be in a hurry to be given to guilt-consciousness, simply because the preacher said it. For a layman, it is hard to tell wrong from what is really right. Trust your heart. Unless swayed by some passion or an inordinate desire-it is usually right.

Neither be over-modest, nor put a premium on your merit. Do not impose upon yourself more limitations than necessary.

Survival is an achievement indeed. But to be alive and to aspire to live better is a greater accomplishment. Celebrate this venturesome human aspiration. Decry the so-called virtue that dampens the joy of living and demolishes its buoyancy. Such a virtue is no substitute for a dedicated life and the noble behaviour that vibrates with the fear of God and love for all.

Whenever in doubt, pray and turn to Him for guidance. God is not an abstraction, He is! He does respond whenever occasion demands-talk to Him. God is a Living Presence, walk with Him.

Virtue is a challenge to what man is. It inspires him to aspire, progress and prevail.

Seeker! Evil is your evil thought. It defies the human spirit, and sullies the human heart. Having lost its bearings, it staggers and strays and comes to grief.

Man is yet in the making, hence to err is human, a human problem. The human problems must be solved on the human level. For that human approach is essential. You need a kindly heart to realize other people's difficulties. Do not behave high and mighty, as if you do no wrong. Help a wrong-doer, for something might be the matter that led him astray.

Neither sermonise, nor jeer. The man who errs is angry at heart for having betrayed the human spirit. Blame him not-if it can be helped. Nobody relishes being taken to task-not even a child of small age.

Out of spite, and because of resentment for not being given due regard, sometimes man does what he won't do otherwise. Everybody cares for his 'self-respect'-a criminal even. Befriend him and speak in a friendly manner. A friend is a privileged person in anybody's life. Help him to keep up human dignity. Let him rehabilitate himself and be himself again.

Seeker! One day, you might also take to preaching. Learn to practice what you preach. What you do matters more than what you say. Be worthy of the trust; and trust him whom you care to guide. Better sense does prevail when the tempers cool down. Learn to have patience and be of good humour. Honour your ward more than he honours you. Preferably be generous. Teach him to value his own self-esteem. A person who loses it is undone as a human being.

It is better not to preach than to preach wrong. It is easy to advise, but hard to live up to that. Value truly what you say. Speak only when there is a likelihood of its being acted upon. Nobody relishes to hold somebody's "baby", the advice that he offers. No idle gossip, only responsible talk to save your own peace of mind. Do not demolish anybody's belief unless it can be rebuilt better. Say only the right things when addressing somebody. OM!

Day in and day out, people say: "Don't do this. Don't do that." A life that extols only the don'ts and shies away from a positive approach, is lop-sided; it sickens.

Don't say don't till you can tell what to do instead?

12. WHO LIVES IF MAN DIES

OM! Sir, God is not your affair alone, we are concerned as well. So long as you live amongst us all, your beliefs and the way of life are going to affect us also. We are ready to share, even help. But in the times of trials and tribulations you should also live and believe responsibly. Let no one demolish what has been built up so assiduously for the good of all.

Every religion has two aspects: The first aspect is your individual affair. That is between you and your Creator. You can pray and worship as you choose or desire. If anybody interferes, we will be the first to fight your battles.

The second aspect is your way of life in relation to others. That is where you should allow the society to step in. Let it be a joint venture to safeguard the wider interests of the Family of Man. Man has come a long way to understand the meaning of the general well-being. None should exploit the trust and faith of the common people for an individual gain. Let there be a get-together of hearts and minds. Fair and free. exchange of thoughts and views should be the rule and not an exception. Man to man, when left alone, usually they talk sense. But as members of organised groups they speak the language of pride and prejudice. That makes it necessary to respect the views of an individual also. Nobody should deny him the freedom of expression. The world at large hasn't as yet become integrated into one people. So we will have to live with everyday strife here and there.

The so-called bureaucracy? What about that? It is needed for a long time to come. Let it not however be a wooden one. It should be thoughtful and progressive. ....I leave it to

them to do what is good for the restive populace. To manage the affairs of a progressive world, we need contented homes and men in authority to be of a charitable disposition. The collective wisdom of the exalted few is also needed for a democratic way of life. Whomsoever you elect by the majesty of your casting vote should be ready to live a dedicated life.

We need the world we live in for a long long time. Not a wooden but a lively and healthy approach is essential.

Save man to save the world. Who lives if man dies not only in the universe but also in the human heart? OM!

13. A TELLTALE

OM! Aspirant! Once a child got annoyed and left home in a huff. As he calmed down, he found that his people were not to blame but he himself was at fault. In what way? Well, let us not pry into a child's guileless heart.

Now he wanted to go back home. But he could not eschew pride so easily, so soon. He kept on waiting for his people to come and take him home. But no one turned up.

At last, he could wait no longer. It was late in the evening and he was alone. Somehow he must find a way to save his face. Suddenly, he saw his cow returning home after the day out for grazing. "That makes it easy," he told himself.

He caught hold of the cow's tail and began to march back home. He had to run, being dragged by the animal. The cow was in a hurry to reach its calf.

As he was going, holding the cow's tail, he went on saying aloud for all to hear: "O! Dear cow! Please don't force me to go back home. Thankless people that they are, let them suffer." And thus it was that he was back home.

Seeker! Do we not behave the same way? We blame the poor mind and the sense-urges, while all along it is our own fault. We hold the tail and follow the trail.

Let us search our own hearts for our failings. Let us have the courage to own our mistakes and be ready to make amends. OM!

PART V

1. THE TRADITIONAL MYTH AND MYTHOLOGY WITH A TING (E) OF REALITY

OM! What ordinarily is, grows, decays, then dies. Nothing prevails in the same state eternally-man included. In growth the forces of integration-Devas (देव)-grow from strength to strength and the forces of disintegration- Asuras (असुर)-grow weaker and weaker.

In decay the forces of integration-Devas-grow weaker and weaker, and the forces of disintegration-Asuras-grow from strength to strength.

I would term this deva-asura confrontation as Samharsha (समरशा). To my mind, Samharsha is no shooting war. It is a vital dimension of life. It is an endeavour to demolish a state of disequilibrium (असमता) between the forces of integration and the forces of disintegration and to reach a state of equilibrium (समता).

Since in God alone both the forces of integration (देव) and those of disintegration (असुर) find their fulfilment, so Samharsha is a way of life in which men and all other living beings inadvertently seek union with the Ultimate Absolute. OM!

2. WHAT AM I

"I live my life in growing orbits

which move out over the things of the world.

Perhaps I can never achieve the last,

but that will be my attempt.

I am circling around God, around the ancient tower,

and I have been circling for a thousand years.

And I still don't know if I am a falcon,

Or a storm, or a great song.

Om! What am I? Don't tell me that I am God-the All- knowing, the All-powerful Brahma. Long long ago that is what I had had as my prayer. The text of the mantra-Aham Brahma Asmi-means that.

One day, sitting astride a huge boulder lying in a mountain stream, that was the mantra I was chanting time and time again.

"Aham Brahma Asmi", "Aham Brahma Asmi"-it went on and on. Of a sudden it crossed my mind that what I had been chanting was "Aham bhrama Asmi" and not "Aham Brahma Asmi" that I ought to have.

Mark the difference please. Aham Brahma Asmi means: "I am Brahma, the God Almighty." However, Aham bhrama Asmi tells a different story.

It means, "I am a mere illusion and not something real.

Brahma is God Almighty but bhrama (भ्रम) is a mere illusion that the mind sometimes entertains.

Amused, I laughed heartily there in that jungle while sitting astride a huge boulder in the mountain stream. The laughter? The surrounding hilltops woke up to echo and re- echo the sound of it.

Of a sudden I fell from the huge boulder down on the sands below. Hardly conscious of the fall, I walked on along the mountain path. Presently someone caught up with me and said: "Hope you're not hurt.....

* Acknowledgment:

Reproduced from the book "NEWS OF THE UNIVERSE"-collection of poems chosen by the Robert Bly, published by Sierra Club Books, San Francisco. As mentioned in the book, the original poem "I live my Life" is from the book "For the Hours of Prayer", by Rainer Maria Rilke, translated by Robert Bly.

He saw me fall and thought that I might have been hurt. But. I was not.

Since that day I have never felt that I was Brahma, the God Almighty, as you would like me to believe. I am human, a human being.

In me lives the high and the low. In me something is being liberated every moment, but more is being ever sucked in. In me the inanimate matter comes to life, rides the high horse of a new-found life and delivers itself unto another life that had, a little earlier, come into being. Thus-in me life goes on-ever coming into being, growing, and

In me lives the animal too, which is being given a fire-bath and made familiar with the human element (पुरुषचत्व) of life. In me also lives the man who is slowly becoming aware of the higher human potentialities-the vibhutis (विभूति, the human splendours).

Ever present observing it all with love and grace is the Almighty Lord, my God-I am often made aware of the divine Presence.

I revere, I love this God because He has condescended to process it all for me. Since my Lord has chosen to stay I cannot think of liberation till His task is done. I love the bondage of life, for He has chosen it for me. OM!

Aspirant! To you confidence and faith should value more than the doubts and misgivings. Persevere and have the tenacity of purpose. Neither dilly-dally, nor falter. Let the mind not waver either. A wavering mind achieves little and has nothing much to offer.

3. LIFE-ITS DIMENSIONS

OM! Seeker! What a masterly stroke of purpose and plan! That is the Lord, our God, the Master of all creation Who accomplishes it!

He quickens the inanimate matter and it sparks into vital flame of life.

Life breathes matter, subsists on it; from the self-same matter, however, it stands apart-is distinct, different. The difference is absolute!

Apparently, there are no common frontiers between life and matter. Life is alive, matter is not. If alive, it is not matter; if it is matter, it does not live. Life is absolute and unmatter-like, and matter is wholly unlife-like.

After coming into being, life is raw. It feels awkward and is in danger of being overwhelmed by the elements. The danger is on purpose, and it is God's Kindly Purpose. It vitalizes life. Life is reanimated and is aflame with a new spirit-Sat, the will to exist and to prevail.

Life is ruthlessly desperate, it seeks to hold on, come what may. Its votaries give and get their gruel. It's on the war path. There is seemingly a blind scramble for survival. The blind scramble is a great hazard. The violence of the struggle-for- existence is gruesome. In the midst of its deadly struggle for survival life stops to ponder! And God smiles knowingly. He blesses life!

Life was alive to Sat-And to Sat has been added another dimension. It is Chit-the will to quest, to know, to cognize.

Chit-the new dimension-gives to life an impetus to grow. As life grows, its awareness grows as well, and its interest in its own existence grows by far the most. To be alive is wonderful with this new dimension added to its mere existence.

As its interest grows, life starts adding new dimensions to both existence (Sat) and awareness (Chit). Whenever it adds a new dimension to either of them, its triumph is great. The thrill is there. Life enjoys its success. It exults over its achievement.

Life comes of age, and becomes aware of another dimension having been added to it. It is Ananda-the buoyancy of the spirit-a sense of fulfilment and a feeling of achievement. Its joy is satisfying: it is BLISS.

Ananda it is which sustains life's interest in adding new dimension to it. And Ananda it is which gives an incentive to accomplish more and more and not rest contented with what is. OM!

4. AN ATHEIST DISCOVERS

HE WAS NOT

OM! A man once come to me and said: "I do not believe in God."

"That makes one person less to bother the hard-pressed Lord," said I.

"Why nobody has ever met Him?"

"By going into hiding He has done the wisest thing. If He were to appear in Person, He would be mobbed."

"But He exists nowhere except in the imagination of some imbecile people".

"More people believe in God, only a few do not. Why not fall in line with those who do?"

He was getting restless and fidgety in the chair.

Before I could go on, he began: "I have come to argue this very point with you."

"But why should I argue you into believing? It makes no difference to me whatever."

"But it does make a difference to me," he said. "Let it."

"Aren't you a yogi? A yogi should help."

"Do you really need my help? I don't think so."

"Why should have I come to you then?"

"That is what I myself was going to ask you."

"Did you mind my coming over to you and talking against the Lord?"

"That is not the point. What I mean to tell you is that you have already failed to argue Him out of your heart."

"I am intrigued."

Unmindful of the interruption, I kept on: "You have your doubts no doubt, but you are very much in mind of Him. Only your faith is not deep enough to soothe your aching heart.

"That's not true.

"My dear friend, to my mind you are not an atheist howsoever much you might profess.

"Do you mean to tell me that I do believe in God?"

"Rather!"

"Why hurt me time and again by dinning it all into my ears?

"I am already feeling sorry for you. What you yourself know, you want me to tell you that.

"I don't understand. Anyway go on.

Suddenly his eyes shone as I looked into them. And there was a strange glow come to his face. Before he could say anything, I continued: "My dear friend! Right from the unicellular amoeba to the multicellular man-all are in quest of Him. Believe it or not, you are also unwittingly striving for God-realization.

"That is rather a sweeping statement.

"I gladly concede you your right to differ. Allow me to explain, however.

Finding him somewhat attentive, I continued: "Nobody wants to die, whether a man, an animal or a shrub. The struggle for existence goes on unabated. No let up. We have got

to strive to keep ourselves alive. We stop at nothing. We kill others so that we may live. A sparrow eats a worm. We kill the sparrow and make a meal of it.

"What about a yogi"?

"A yogi is no exception either. He goes a step further. He seeks immortality. He aspires to live for ever.

"What is wrong about it?"

"Nothing whatever. This drive that impels a living being to struggle for survival is inherent in life. If you permit me to use a Sanskrit word, it is SAT."

"Go ahead, please. I am listening."

"The quest for knowledge starts the moment a person is born. It goes on with every breath inhaled or exhaled till he breathes his last. A child goes to school. A yogi meditates to know. He wants to unravel the purpose of man's being. You are here to know whether or not God exists.'

"I don't deny it.'

"Now allow me to use a Sanskrit word for what is it all about. It is CHIT (चिट). Chit is chetana (चेतना). It is to know, to feel and to react.

"You are right. We do want to know about everything under the sun, even beyond it," he said.

"You want happiness. So do I. A poor man is glad when you give him food. A yogi goes into ecstasy when God blesses him. 'Oh, the bliss of it all,' he exclaims.

"Right or wrong, I have often heard a yogi say so.

"I am not the first one then. It seems you have been going about quite often to augment your faith. You deny God so that others may assert that God is! All this for a break-through. Isn't it?"

"That is how you would like to put it, but....."

Before he could go on, I kept up: "Be it worldly happiness or heavenly bliss, it is ANANDA. Ananda is another Sanskrit word I have used without your permission." "What is in a name? I do want ananda in whatever I do."

"Let me put it this way.

Before I could say anything, the visitor wanted me to let him speak. "Being a student of Sanskrit, I have understood what you want to convey, I have already read about this line of argument," he said.

"That is fine. It makes my task easier.

"Go ahead. No arguments. Just what you believe."

"You know then that while striving for survival (Sat), questing for knowledge (Chit), and seeking happiness (Ananda), man unwittingly quests for Sat-chit-ananda*- the All-knowing, the Blissful One.

"I know Sat-chit-ananda is one of the numerous names given to the Lord."

"Why then deny the existence of God and yet seek Him as Sat, Chit, Ananda? That is like refusing wealth but accepting it as pounds, shillings and pence.

"It is interesting," he said.

• To a student of Sanskrit it is clear, but even otherwise it is not difficult to understand. In Sanskrit it is a general practice to combine words into one single word. In this case, Sat + Chit + Ananda-Sat-chit-ananda-Sachchidananda.

"Truth is never dull."

That was not all the dialogue. We had a little more discussion. At the end, though apparently satisfied, one thing still agitated his mind: "Quest for God is understandable but not the desire of a yogi to attain salvation.'

"Moksha and not salvation is the word," I said.

"Moksha or whatever it be-it is immoral to leave the world to its fate after exploiting its resources**. Isn't it being selfish?"

"Allow me to explain, sir," I tried to cut in but he continued: "Being only an individual's gain, the loss is ultimately man's. After the attainment of Moksha, a man of mature experience and tried knowledge is lost to the world.

"Now listen, please.'

"All right".

"Both of us are sitting in this room. You came in while I was already here.

"True.'

"How would you react if I were to lock you up in this room?"

"I won't allow you to do that.'

"Haven't you already been here for quite some time?"

"That was of my own free will.'

"Now why should a man of God be not allowed to quit or enter life as and when he wills? Why should you grudge him the freedom of choice?"

"I don't.'

"The difference between a free man and a man in bondage should make you wise. After attaining Moksha, a man of God is of greater service to humanity.'

"So Moksha is not a complete withdrawal from the affairs of the world."

"Definitely not.'

"Now no high sounding phrases that I may take a lifetime to understand. Explain it all in simple words.

** Moksha is not to run away from the world, leaving it to its fate. It is to 'run away' from a mistaken point of view. It is the restoration of a proper perspective on life-it is a revaluation of values.

"You want to live. It is Sat. You want to know. It is Chit. You want to feel happy. It is Ananda.-Though you want it all, you don't want to slave. You want to have a free will-you aspire for Moksha.

"True.

"Now it is simple arithmetic. You seek Sat + Chit + Ananda, and aspire for Moksha. Isn't it?"

"It is."

"So my friend here is not only a believer in Sat-chit- ananda, God Almighty, but is also in quest of Him. Now that is exactly what you wanted me to say so that you could feel more confident about your faith in God.

"It is too good to be true."

"But it is.'

"Now what do you advise me to do?"

"Instead of walking blindfolded and stumbling across truths of life, discover them knowingly. Strive purposefully."

Later, he once wrote: "You met me on my ground. No doubts assail my mind now.

And I wrote back: "The fundamental test of truth is its power to convince and to inspire self-confidence. The head might argue but your heart readily accepts it. All beliefs and 'isms' meet their test in the open forum of direct experience-So esteem, believe and experience." OM!

The scepticism that inspires a purposeful spirit of enquiry and quest is wholesome. To frown at everything and not to suggest anything instead-is in bad taste.

5. MAN, SCIENCE AND SPIRITUALITY

OM! God created man-so it is said-no doubt about it. But what about the survival of this physically vulnerable creature?

Though himself not a creator in that sense, he has been able to initiate, create and develop so many basics of survival. In this difficult task, his relentless spirit of adventure and quest has been of great help. What inspires the creation of the basics of survival is the human scientific temper.

This temper not only takes care of the basics but is also fully involved in the effort to improve the quality of life at various levels. The scientific revolution is afoot ever and anon to as if create afresh man and his universe.

As man is, he is alive and life is his mainstay. When life departs, he drops down dead-To the dead it matters little whether some supernatural power brought it about or life itself took the fatal step.

Life? Sat, Chit and Ananda are its three vital dimensions and man is always on his toes to live them-both severally and integrally.

When he lives them severally, the effort involved is of a scientific nature. It is man's scientific temper that is at work. While at it what he comes by is science, an empirical value of life.

When it comes to the question of living them integrally as Sat-chit-ananda, the Ultimate of man's quest, the effort involved is then of a spiritual nature. It is man's spiritual temper that is at work. While at it he comes by spirituality, a transcendental value of life.

Now; the scientific temper quickens man's intellect which directs him to build a better world-wherein nature would help rather than obstruct. In the field of science and technology the progress is phenomenal. From the cave man to the man of the space age is a far far cry. The scientific approach to life has already paid rich dividends.

The spiritual temper* inspires man to rediscover himself. It lays down certain rules of conduct and fires man to live

• It is hard to make out where the area of scientific temper ends and the domain of the spiritual temper begins. Both of them are, in fact, integrally involved in man's creative endeavour (कर्म, Karma).

A scientific discovery or an invention is a miracle of man's scientific temper. The opening up of the new horizons of higher human understanding is made possible by the spiritual temper.

them. Impelled by this transcendental value of life, man offers prayers in all devotedness and does sadhana in all solemnity. Even in defiance to the human nature, a well- defined path is set out-which is quite distinct from the so- called worldly way of life. Fired thus man toils-does Titiksha-and grapples with the vagaries of the mind and the intellect.

As man progresses on the path of self-fulfilment and self- realization, he is spiritually aroused and his way of life becomes truly enlightened, purposeful and revealing.

Let me now skip over whatever else could be said about what man experiences while treading the path of God- realization with the remarks: "Experience it to know it.

Experience differs from stage to stage, from person to person." OM!

6. TIME-THE FOURTH DIMENSION

OM! Aspirant! Matter, Man and God, these are the three dimensions of the universe that I face every day. Which is the ultimate amongst them and which one is supreme? I know not. Are they separate entities? I do not know. Or do the three of them merge into one- the be-all and the end-all? I wish I knew.

I cannot possibly imagine that all is God. If I do, then the next moment I am nowhere. Why should I endeavour and be in so feverish a haste to do things?

You hurl a stone at me. I get hurt. You who hurled the stone at me, the stone that hurt me, I who got hurt, and the hurt that hurts, are the facts of life. None budges an inch away; they are there to stay.

While trying to resolve the mystery of Matter, Man and God, man has been, from time immemorial, speculating, experimenting, visualizing, envisioning.

To me, all that is not I, is Matter (Prakriti).

Man? Undoubtedly I am man. That is what you are also. Seemingly that which is neither Man nor Prakriti, is God.

Apparently God completes my universe. That's simple enough. But it leads me nowhere.

Let me watch Matter, Man and God at work.

Matter shows me the way to Tapah (तपः). Tapah is the creative principle of life. Nothing can be accomplished unless man takes to it-endeavours creatively.

Life is a growing process. The meaning and the purpose of Tapah grow as well. That is to say, Tapah keeps abreast of life's growing process. A lion would kill for food when hungry. Man might choose not to eat if he does not like to kill for food. In both the cases it is Tapah but at two different levels.

Tapah inspires spiritual endeavour-Sadhana (साधना). Sadhana is Tapah with a difference. It is inspired by some noble purpose. If I fast for spiritual awakening, it's Sadhana. All Tapah at the spiritual level is Sadhana because some divine purpose or another inspires it. Whether Sadhana or Tapah-they, however, cannot make man live for ever. Whatever comes into being prevails, undergoes specific changes, grows, decays and perishes to come into being once again.

"षड् भावविकारा भवन्ति-इतिवार्ष्यायाणिः।

जायते, अस्ति, विपरिणमते, वर्धते, अपक्षीयते, विनश्यतीति।

Nirukta 1.2

भाव के छः विकार होते हैं यह वार्ष्यायणिः मानता है। उत्पन्न होता है, है, विशेष परिणाम को प्राप्त होता है, बढता है, क्षीण होता है, नष्ट होता है।

Now according to Varshyayani there are six modifications of becoming (भाव): genesis, existence, alteration, growth, decay and destruction. That is to say:

(i) a living being comes into existence (jayate,जयते) after bridging the gulf between abhava* (अभाव, pre-existence) and bhava (becoming, existence).

Abhava (अभाव) should normally mean non-existence. But it does not. In the present context as a scientific term abhava is the existence (भाव, bhava) of the absence of existence. As any other state of phenomenal existence-childhood, young age, middle age, old age etc.,-abhava is also a being's state of existence. I may name this dimension of Abhava as pre-existence. It is abhava of the phenomenal existence only and not of a being. There is no such stage wherein a being ceases.

(ii) it exists (asti, अस्ती).

(iii) it undergoes specific changes till it is what it is to become (viparinamate, विपरिणमत).

(iv) it grows to its normal stature (vardhate, वर्धते).

(v) it decays (apakshiyate, अपक्षीयते).

(vi) it perishes (vinashyati, विनश्यति).

Only the becoming is demolished and not the being who took to becoming.

This is the law that governs all normal healthy life. One can neither stop decay nor make a living-being live for ever.

If that is the law where do I stand then? If nobody can stop decay, nor defy death, why should I then do things spiritual? Why? Yes, why was I then brought into being? To be shackled and thrown into the river of life? And that too by the Benevolent One, the All-knowing and the Almighty?

I am nonplussed and my mind is bogged down. Lead me, Kindly Light. Man helps man, the helpless one the most. You are the Creator of man-aren't you? Does it behove You to let the Creation go uncared for, unattended to?

That is how I found myself arguing many years ago. Those were the most trying days of my life. I was awfully restless and in agony-nothing could contain its sting. Even after meditating for hours at a stretch, I didn't feel like being at peace. Any Sadhana that came to my mind, I took to. Whatever anybody suggested I did. However, nothing gave me equanimity.

Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana and Dhyana-I practised all; still I was as restless as ever. In those days, while lying down, I used to feel like sitting up. While sitting, I used

to feel like getting up to go-and I used to be possessed as if by a disquieting wander-lust. You could see me running around all over the place in feverish haste, fired by an unknown sense of urgency.

I tried one spiritual endeavour after another. I constantly 'stared' at a small dark point. I stared steadily likewise at a bigger white spot; I stared at a burning flame; I stared at the tip of my nose till my head began to reel. I concentrated in Dhyana on the forehead even.

Many a day and many a night I went on practising for long hours various Asanas, Mudras, too-Yoga Mudra and Shanmukhi Mudra especially. That was usually at night when I could get some secluded place to myself. Nothing occurred. The disquiet was very much there to unnerve me.

I took to reciting God's name (Japa). I counted not the beads of a rosary but a basketful of dried peas. I visited shrines. I worshipped in the open, on house-tops and in temples sublime. I bowed low and was down on my knees in many a place of worship. Alas! No peace for me. It eluded me, eluded my days and nights. I was burning. I was on fire-afire with an urgency that kept me on tiptoe all the time-waiting, waiting and waiting. Though I knew not for what and for whom.

I wanted to talk to God. I was in quest of Him and wanted to walk with Him. Alas! I didn't get a chance to kiss His shadow even. ....

I called out to Him from hilltops and clamoured aloud for a Glimpse from the valleys below. At one time I called out to Him while standing in ice-cold waters. Later I sobbed out to Him standing barefoot on the burning sands. I sought Him in the eyes of those who felt concerned about my welfare. God is love, they had told me, I sought Him in vain in the harsh words hurled at me, God helps those who suffer for Him, I had been told. Even the worst adversity threw up its arms and said: "God is nowhere near me. Go and seek Him elsewhere."

I went into the solitude of the solitary nights and sobbed aloud: "Oh, Ye, Unknown! Where art Thou?"

Nights kept mum, nor did the stars say a word. "We wish we knew" was all that I heard being whispered around.

I turned to the moon and stared at it. That didn't help either. Soon I felt disillusioned. I went back where I belonged-to my fellow beings.

Who said godmen lead? I turned and sought guidance from them. Though they were not human enough to feel for others, they claimed to have been blessed by the Benevolent One. One of them once said: "Here! Ask and you will get what you seek. Behold! God is here."

I looked at him. I looked high above in the sky and said: "Help me meet someone who is truly human.

Now and then a solitary sympathetic voice and a few crumbs of food thrown in... did come my way.

Here is someone who wants me to earn my living. Here is someone who wants me to live as others live. How could I? Worn out, starved, ill-clad, badly off, and mercilessly mauled by one and all, one day I did go to someone for work that pays. Face unshaven, clothes unwashed, shoes frayed at the toes-I sat and waited anxiously for a 'yes' or 'no'. He looked at me, looked into my eyes and rapped out: "The fire!"

I was surprised, startled too.

"Young man! There is fire in your eyes. Doesn't this fiery restlessness.... You are burning with it," he continued.

I had a look at him. I was in tears; I got up to go. Suddenly I felt hot all over-all tensed up. I looked up. I looked around. The chairs, the table and a man of no consequence-dark, thin, lean and in his late fifties.

"I want to go....

"Go," he cut me short and said, "Go! Go where you belong. The sparks fly heavenwards."

That did it.

What he said sparked .... and flashed all around.

I saw moving around so many scintillating threads of light-shaped like an arc of a circle joined to another arc.

Yes, that did it.

With seven days' hunger gnawing at my inside, I was back on the road-my abode.

On that day, I found myself strangely aware of a living presence!

It was the presence!

I looked up to scan the horizons. ....

A figure of light it was that I saw. Whether my glance followed it or it followed my glance, there it was! When I looked into the distance it was as tall as the sky. As I lowered my glance, it came closer. It was then not as tall. .... A sizeable figure of light stood before me. I ran and it ran with me. I walked, and it walked with me. I sat down on the ground. It did not sit but kept standing at some distance.

I picked up a piece of paper lying nearby and just glanced at it. There! On it stood the same figure of light, tiny little thing. It moved as my glance moved from one word to another. It was as small as that. Awed, I closed my eyes. Again, the figure of light was before my mind's eye. What's it? It seemed to say something. But I was far too awe-struck to respond Slowly I opened my eyes and I looked steadily at the summer sky. There on the distant horizons appeared the same figure of light.

Days passed. I got used to the awesome presence. Fascinated, I wanted to talk about it. I couldn't however tell anybody. Who would believe that I saw a figure that moved as my glance moved? I left the town and went to a distant place. It was too much to keep silent about this mystic experience.

There, I used to go to a secluded place-it was a sandy waste where nobody cared to go. There, I would stand and stare at the summer sun, sit down and stare at it. I would sometimes lie down on the burning sands and go on staring at it. That was my everyday routine. I would go early in the morning and come back when the sun was fairly high up. Sometimes I would go in the evening and come back when sundown.

One day, I couldn't go. I mean something in me did not permit me to go. I sat down where I was. Strange enough but true, I heard a voice clamour and announce: "It's Me. It's Me. "Here I must stop. I must not go on.

At that time, I didn't know. I am a little aware of it now. It was TIME (काल , kaala) all the time. It's there even now. As I write, the tiny figure of light moves from one word to the next word. It is as mute as ever-nothing to say-as it were.

Ancient seers called it Kaala*. Some people call it Narayana (नारायण). Others prefer to call it Ananta (अनंत). It's the timeless TIME-all the time.

*Kaala (काल) is the same as Time.

How about me? I feel as much inspired by chanting Narayana, Narayana, as when I chant OM! OM! The realization might come some day. Who knows? Maybe, time is not yet. I do however have a feeling that the human effort and whatever men aspire to find their fulfilment in TIME-the Kaala, the Narayana, the Ananta, the Absolute.

Aspirant! I was aware of the three dimensions of the universe-Matter (Prakriti), Man (Purusha) and God (Parm-purusha). Now I have also to take note of TIME-the fourth dimension of all that is. That adds one more dimension to my quest.

What should I do? Shall I blaze a new trail? Or shall I beat a hasty retreat? No going back, however, it's not possible.

I will, I vow to quest and quest. quest..... That gives to my life a well-meaning meaning.

As I am, I have to throw in my lot with the universe and its phenomena. I will avail of their cooperation to aspire after God's Grace in order to transcend what I am. Emergence of the timeless TIME on the horizon of my consciousness has sparked a new hope. In me life has, it seems, turned the corner.

Maybe, TIME would extend the frontiers of my mind and the intellect. Maybe It would make the revelations possible. Let it be.

Let me discover or rediscover the new dimensions of whatever is there. Wonder if I shall ever be at peace. A sad unquiet ever disturbs me. At times, when sadness sits heavy on my heart-it's Time probably that calls out helpfully: "Cheer up! IT SHALL PASS!"

Maybe my present life is a life of fulfilment of my previous life. Not that yours is not, it is also like that. Maybe in my past birth I died young. A lot was left undone which is now rather impatiently seeking fulfilment. Winding up takes time. It's all right. Now I just wait patiently for TIME to take me unto Itself. Even as such, there is much to do.

Sorry, dear aspirant. Sometimes I am taken in by my past and TIME joins in and talks too. It speaks of things long past. But that does not interest me much. Often I tell my friends: "Death is a bomb-shell. It strikes, it shatters, and most of the man is left a wreckage". Now I am in quest of a Sadhana that shall make death a routine affair-in fact that is what it is. It should not be a major catastrophe to be dreaded.

Seeker! TIME has a lot to do with the human mind. Maybe, it is a dimension of Time. Maybe Time is one of the dimensions of the Mind.

Once again, there is an urge to surge forward and transcend the human mind. So far, I have been trying to bring it under control. Now I would, if I could, leap over TIME's vital dimension? to reach the beyond.

TIME so often seems to stand still. And I wonder what has happened to me. Though living amongst people and constantly rapped by their disquieting thoughts and emotions-I find myself in a howling wilderness.

Whatever I had been doing in the past seems to have been a passing phase-at best a mystic phase. Doubts have now begun to bristle hard. Whatever I sought was not God-could have been anything else. The quest cannot be a phased programme. It is a question of knowing Him or not knowing Him at all-that's all. At the moment, TIME seems to have added a new dimension to my quest. Now I dare ask God, my Lord: "How long? When and where and what for?" OM!

7. WEATHER AND THE UNIVERSE

OM! Weather and the universe: The universe we live in, is ever-changing. The sun appears in the east and the day dawns. The sun disappears in the west and it's nightfall. Then there is the weather: Weather is always changing, man knows it to his cost. All the changes in the weather are caused primarily by thermal imbalances. Other complex imbalances are involved as well, but as yet man doesn't know much about them.

In the language of ancient sciences, changes in the weather are caused primarily by the modifications of the five tattvas*-Akash (Ether), Vaya (Air), Tejas (Fire), Apas (Water) and Prithvi (Earth). Normally man is aware of this weather only. It is an everyday happening and man can feel, sense, cognize and experience it.

• Tattvas: There are twenty-five tattvas: (1) Purusha-the animate principle of nature, the universal spirit, the Spirit, (2) Prakriti-Primal Nature, (3) Mahat- Buddhi tattva, cosmic intelligence, (4) Ahamkara-the I-Principle, self-consciousness, (5) Manas-the cosmic mind.

Then there are the ten Indriyas (इन्द्रियां), five Tanmatras and five Mahabhutas. The five Mahabhutas are: Akasha, Vayu, Tejas (Fire), Apas and Prithvi: (Refer the book "Advaita Vedanta and Modern Science" by John Dobson, published by Vivekananda Vedanta Society, Chicago-USA):

(i) Akasha, usually translated as ether, is the gravitational energy of matter dispersed in space. The word also means space. The gravitational energy is in the space of the dispersion. Our orientation in the gravitational field is perceived, through the saccule in the ear.

(ii) Vayu, usually translated as air, is kinetic energy. As matter, dispersed in space, falls together by gravity, the gravitational energy is converted to kinetic energy. Kinetic energy is perceived as temperature, through the skin.

(iii) Tejas, usually translated as fire, is radiation. The word means that which shines. The excess kinetic energy (heat energy) of a condensing star is lost to the surrounding space as the energy of its radiation. It is radiation which is perceived through the eye.

(iv) and (v) Apas and Prithvi, usually translated as water and earth, are electricity and magnetism. The presiding deities of Apas and Prithvi were said to be twins. Electricity and magnetism go together. You cannot have one without the other. Electricity and magnetism are perceived through the tongue and the nose. Protons taste sour, and the molecular configurations perceived through the nose are magnetic.

This is the terminology of a higher science-an ancient super-science. A single comprehensive book on this science being not available, it is difficult to define the tattvas adequately. Whatever little is available, it's not enough.

Technical terms are always peculiar to a science. It is wrong to think of the terminology in terms of a literal translation of the words concerned.

What is a tattva after all? It is the essence of a phenomenon.

Alas! Wanton destruction of our ancient literature by neglect and the foreign invaders leaves us in the dark about the glory that was India. It's time we study the ancient history of our sciences and culture. To quote: "I choose the past because it is only by knowing the past that one can improve the present or cope with the future.

However, besides these five tattvas, there are another twenty more. Their modifications also cause weathers. These weathers affect the world and those who live in it. They affect man and influence his life. In the absence of any specific knowledge, we just dub these weathers as atmospheric disturbances or supernatural happenings.

Many of the weathers are very very subtle. A weather caused by the modifications of the Purusha tattua or the Mahat tattva cannot be sensed-nor experienced. However, not a layman but only a spiritually awakened person can divine these subtle weathers. To the former they are at best the doings of some supernatural power.

If man could, somehow, fashion material tools or develop some super powers, he would see how much bigger, larger and fabulous the world would turn out to be. OM!

8. MAN AND THE UNIVERSE

OM! Man and the universe: Ours is not the only galaxy, there are many more. There in those galaxies, as well, the play of tattvas goes on and different weathers prevail. They, the weathers, also affect our lives-howsoever infinitesimally that be.

Even as such, our galaxy is not a small affair. The cosmic dance of the tattvas goes on here endlessly. Because of their modifications changes do Occur. The changes are inevitable-it is a rule and not an exception. As such, imbalances are bound to occur. These imbalances raise storms and create stirs accordingly whether the imbalances are big or small. Whether it is a breeze, a gale, a cyclone, a hurricane or the trade wind-whether it is a drizzle, a light shower, heavy downpour, cloudburst or the monsoons-whether it's a thunderstorm, a tempest, a tornado, a blizzard or a mere hailstorm-all this and much more that lash the world originate from the thermal, electrical, and other innumerable imbalances.

Man is normally conscious of the modifications of our weather only. He knows that the modifications of the Apas tattva cause rains. And he knows as well that the Tejas tattva manifests itself as fire, heat, light, electricity, etc. He has fashioned tools to make use of these modifications to his advantage. However, he is yet to tackle the Manas-tattua and its modifications. If he could somehow bring about some sort of collaboration between the Manas tattva and the energy. it will revolutionize the world and the world of science. OM!

9. PRALAYA-A DYNAMIC PHENOMENON

OM! Weather ever changes, so do man and Maya. An imbalance here, an imbalance there-that is a regular feature of life and that of Nature too. Their equilibrium is disturbed, poise is disturbed too. Whenever there is a crisis because of an inordinate disequilibrium, Pralaya strikes to demolish it. Equilibrium is then re-established, the poise is restored. (Here I may point out that physical laws and spiritual laws are similar. That is how I have always felt. I find it difficult, however, to express my views in words. These laws work on many different planes and under different sets of conditions. That's all.)

Pralaya has in it the dynamics which restores the missing link between life and nature-Purusha and Prakriti- whenever the occasion arises. The wherefore and the why of it is beyond me to cognise. It eludes, as yet, man's understanding.

In the case of Nature, Pralaya's dynamics are comparatively easier to understand. The tattvas involved being "gross", their working can be sensed, cognized and possibly moulded as well. Man's progress in the scientific field indicates that.

In case of life, however, Pralaya's dynamics is rather difficult to comprehend. The tattvas involved in this case being very subtle, their working is difficult to sense or cognize.

In between life and nature, Manas-tattva holds the key position. It is at once a dividing line as well the integrating link between Mahabhutas and the remaining twenty tattvas. As such, Manas tattva-the Mind-emerges as a great force (entity?). Let me now continue with Pralaya in relation to man only. Isn't he before us?

Sat, Chit, Ananda and Time are the four dimensions of man's phenomenal existence. Pralaya is the fifth dimension. In addition to the human factor in man's life, Pralaya is the unpredictable factor. It is the dynamic potential of whatever is! It occasions mystic happenings and is the chief architect of their doings. If, somehow, a layman could know-divine even-the dynamics of Pralaya, he would be able to shatter the mystique of the so-called miracles and the mysticism.

I admit that I cannot say exactly how Pralaya works the cosmos-but this much I do know-its dynamics is the essence of all "revolutions"! It plays an important part in the working of the universe.

Seeker! Maya* is a phenomenon of life. Weather** is a phenomenon of Nature. What Maya is to life, Weather is to Nature.

Man without life and its phenomenon Maya churning him-is difficult to realize. A world without weather and its changing nature swirling it-is not easy to visualize. Maya keeps man ever on the march from one change to another change. Weather keeps on changing the face of the earth and constantly hustling its habitants to face the challenge.

Whether man enriches life and its dimension Maya or both of them enrich man as such-is difficult to tell. Maybe it is a case of mutual enrichment. However, if weather is any indication, Maya plays a vital role in man's life. It sparks one change or another and man is always in the making, progressing ever. That is to say:

* Maya is neither a delusion, an enigma, nor something mystic. It is the ever- changing aspect of life-a vital dimension.

** Prakriti, too, is a God's going concern and not something static. The ever changing aspect of it is weather.

Life is a growing process. There is no finality about it. This dimension of life is Maya. It expresses itself in six modifications, "genesis, existence, alteration, growth, decay and destruction".

Talking about man, for he is before us, these are the six states of his phenomenal existence:

(1) Man's phenomenal existence (भव bhava) originates (जायते): he takes to becoming.

(2) he* exists (अस्ति), conception takes place,

(3) he undergoes specific changes till he is what he is to be (विपरिणमते),

(4) he is born and begins to grow in limbs and all till he attains full human stature (वर्धते).

(5) he starts ageing-decay starts (अपचियाते),

(6) he 'dies'-i.e. his becoming comes to an end, his phenomenal existence ceases (विनश्यति).

Man had 'become', now his 'becoming' is over. Is it the end of man when his phenomenal existence ceases? No! Only man's becoming ceases. He is once again in a state of 'pre-existence" in which he existed before becoming-later he will take to becoming again as he had taken to becoming earlier.

However, for another person whose becoming is not yet over the deceased person's phenomenal existence does cease for ever. He can never see the deceased person as he was previously. Now he can see the deceased only as he would be after becoming again. As such, death-the sixth state of man's phenomenal existence-is nothing short of a major catastrophe. It is something more than a mere change. It is an extraordinary "revolution". Something has struck the phenomenal existence of man and he is what he was before becoming. This mystic phenomenon the dynamics of which strikes and demolishes man's phenomenal existence (भाव) and its six dimensions-is Pralaya.

Again! The essence of weather is change. The essence of Maya is "revolution". What sparks a revolution is Pralaya.

* The word he stands for man's phenominal existence.

We know what the weather is. Sometimes it is cold, sometimes it is hot, sometimes it rains and sometimes there is a thunderstorm*. We know as well the anatomy of Maya: genesis, existence, alteration, growth, decay and destruction. What is Pralaya anyhow?

Pralaya is Maya with a difference, just as revolution is change with a difference-just as a thunderstorm is a rain storm with a difference. (To my mind, the dynamics of Pralaya can very well be compared with the dynamics of a thunderstorm.)

Thunderstorm: it is a phenomenon of weather, it is weather when it is prevailing. Let the weather experts say how a thunderstorm originates, all that I am concerned with is what it works: A thunderstorm corrects a state of disequilibrium (असमता) and restores equilibrium (समता) - thus saving the world from a major catastrophe. As a scientist would put it: it restores the thermal balance and the bolt of lightning that it unleashes restores the electrical equilibrium of the earth.

In that sense, Pralaya, too, is a storm. It also originates because of one imbalance or another-the imbalance which will be disastrous if not corrected in time. As in the case of a thunderstorm, in the case of Pralaya, too, it's hard to tell the why or the wherefore of it. Humanity hasn't as yet grasped the fuller meaning or the entire purpose of it. Under the circumstances, it's difficult to tell how the dynamics of Pralaya gets going. I will try to explain how it works.

Wherever, whenever, there is an imbalance between life and nature, life and life, life and its empirical values, life and its transcendental values-the dynamics of Pralaya strikes

* Even a student of elementary science knows that the earth maintains its (electrical) charge practically constant. The scientists believe that it is the thunderstorm which accomplishes this. It regularly replenishes the lost charge and thus makes it possible for the earth to keep up the balance.

A thunderstorm is not an isolated affair. All over the world some 2000 and odd of them are occurring every second. The scientists have yet to discover many other weathers and the storms that originate because of them. The atmosphere is always disturbed because of one weather or another, because of one storm or another. In fact, these weathers originate because of the modifications of one tattva or another.

like lightning and restores that particular equilibrium*. Pralaya strikes mild. It does strike hard; and it strikes with vengeance, too. Be it a petty quarrel, a free-for-all, a faction fight, an armed conflict or a savage world-wide war-be it a minor ailment or an epidemic, be it a small mishap, an untoward happening, a fatal accident or a major catastrophe-be it the Law of Moral Justice or the law of the land taking its course-be it the spirit of vengeance working hot or the wrath of God visiting upon peoples-be it the death itself of a living phenomenon or recovering from its deadly blow-they are all Pralaya's thrusts, whacks and blows to end a particular state of imbalance and bring about a state of equilibrium.

Pralaya as the doomsday, there is a remote possibility of it. Wonder if there shall ever by such a state of imbalance, (disequilibrium) that would warrant a Pralaya which might annihilate the whole universe. Pralaya as the doomsday is only a hypothetical question. I am not worried about it. I do, however, concern myself with Pralaya-which is an everyday affair (dainamdina Pralaya).

Now I come to the phenomena of death and rebirth. They, too, are the dimensions of Pralaya-its modifications. Pralaya as a phenomenon of life is the process of restoration of equilibrium whenever it is lost because of some known or unknown factors-physical, psychic, spiritual, or of some other kind.

In man's physical body one kind of imbalance or another is always occurring. Because of it Pralaya is constantly striking to restore the equilibrium. As a result of Pralaya's drive, something or the other of man is always dying. Death of a part of man's being has its own repercussions in the universe. Both man and the universe react sharply. The

• In this process of restoration, a different kind of imbalance might be caused. That is a different matter however; but it must as well be kept in view. The world is such a complex affair. There is no finality about anything anywhere. I know it's a voice of despair but alas! it's true-man is right when he cries out: "Oh! Lord! It's Maya, it's Maya-one and all. Save me! Save me!"

imbalance caused by the death of even an infinitesimal part of man creates a stir and sets in motion the dynamics of Pralaya: The dynamics of Pralaya strikes like lightning to restore the equilibrium. As a result of Pralaya's thrust, what was demolished 'becomes' again.

This process of death and rebirth of the parts of man's physical being is a regular feature of his being. Again; the phenomenal existence of man's one part or another is always being demolished by Pralaya's thrusts causing thereby complex imbalances. To correct these complex imbalances and to restore equilibrium, Pralaya strikes again and again and the demolished parts 'become' again. To put it simply, some part or the other of man is always dying, but is being regenerated soon after. The continuance of life doesn't seem to break. In both the cases, it is Pralaya's thrust which accomplishes it. This kind of death is an everyday affair, dainamdina Pralaya.

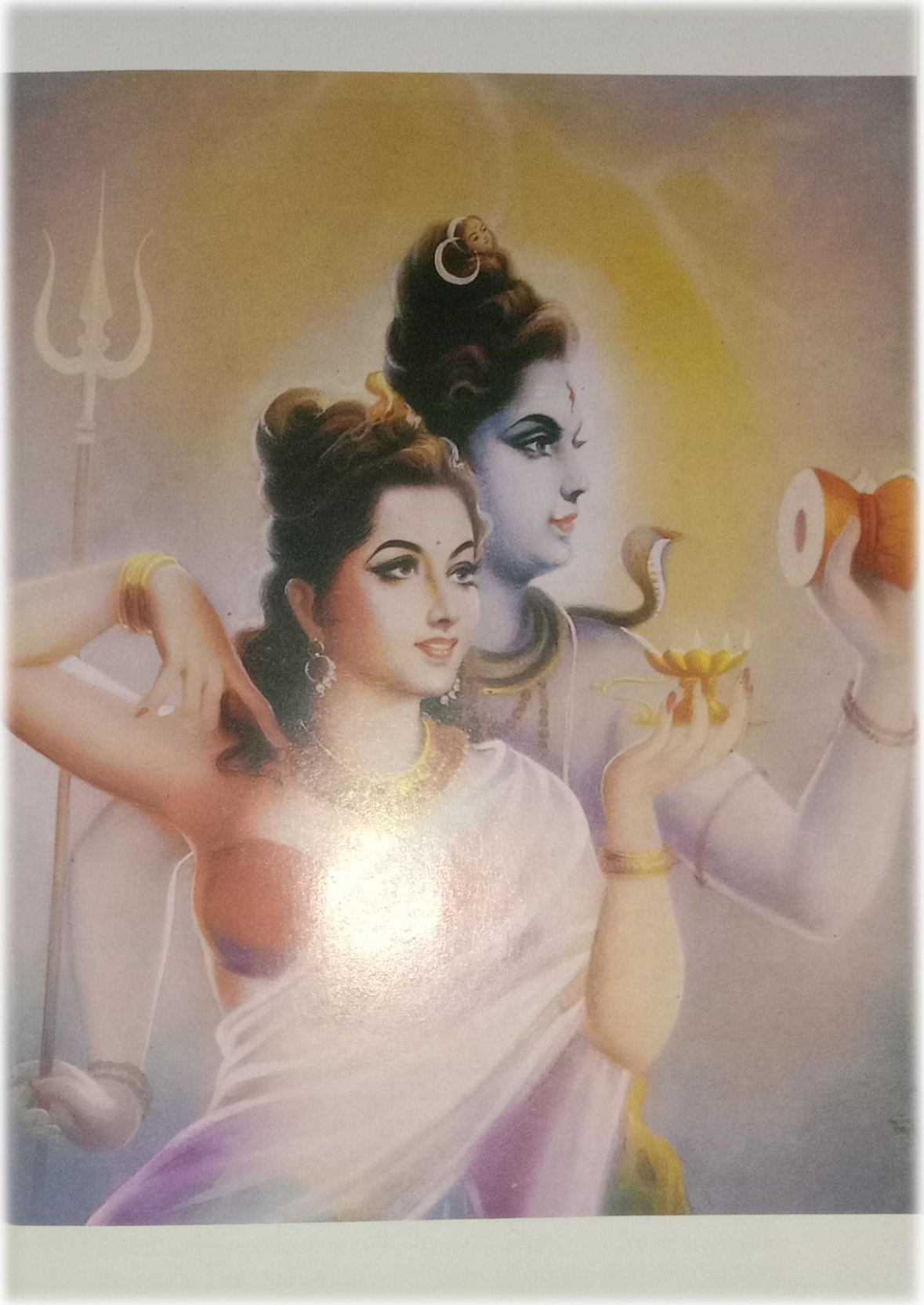
What happens to a part, also happens to the whole of man's being. In that case, the imbalances involved are more complex and greater, involving man's whole being-physical, psychic, spiritual and all that he is. Pralaya strikes, man's 'becoming' is over;

man 'dies', his phenomenal existence ceases. Balance is restored between man and his 'environment'* and between man and the universe. If death of a part could make a stir, death of the whole person should create a crisis in the universe**. And it does create an inordinately galloping imbalance, no doubt about it. Crisis develops, it deepens, and many more complex imbalances are caused by it. As soon as these complex imbalances become a hazard, the dynamic of Pralaya moves to restore normalcy. This extraordinary thrust of Pralaya enables man to bridge the gulf between pre-existence (अभाव, abhava) and existence भाव, bhava); man takes to 'becoming' again-i.e., his phenomenal existence originates. Man is reborn. He reincarnates.

Man's rebirth is as natural as death. To doubt one is to doubt the other. In both the cases it is Pralaya-a dimension

• Man's subtle body (सूछम शरीर), is, in a way, part of the environment.

** Man's causal body (कारण शरीर), is, in a way, a part of the universe.



of life and not something extraneous-which strikes to correct the complex imbalance and restore normalcy. Delay in even one single living phenomenon's rebirth causes a

complex disequilibrium in the environment and in the universe-and is very irksome. It haunts ghost-like the minds of those who are part of the 'deceased's' environment. In this sense, I admit a ghost to be a reality. It does exist and it does touch the lives of the living beings. However, a ghost is not some separate entity as such.

A ghost is the effect of the continued prevalance of the complex imbalances-the imbalances which were caused by the delay in the rebirth of a particular deceased person. Human mind, being what it is, gives a body and a soul to this effect and we have a real ghost that lives and moves about. But it is a rare phenomenon and it does not last for ever. Sooner or later Pralaya strikes and enables the above mentioned deceased person to bridge the gulf between pre- existence (अभाव) and existence (भाव) and reincarnate.

My dear sir! Mind your step. Heed Him, His call. Give a responsible thought to your own thoughts. Watch your deeds-your Karma, your deeds. The Law of Karma-the Law of Moral Justice as some would prefer to call it-is a dimension of Pralaya. It acts to restore the lost equilibrium and saves man from a greater disaster, because of the crisis that develops.

Karma-man's actions and thoughts-opens up the good and the evil 'fronts'. (In the case of weather, it's the cold and the warm 'fronts'.) These good and evil fronts mould man's life and build up human character. They change the physical, mental, moral and spiritual 'climate'. By studying these 'fronts', you can determine man's character-national character even. Individuals' reckless behaviour can demolish the national character and ruin a nation.

And it is because of these 'fronts' that the states of imbalance occur. Pralaya-the watchdog of the powers that be-goes into action in a big way. It sets the ball rolling for a 'revolution'. There is a revolution and a state of equilibrium is restored ultimately. Pralaya is a regular feature of life-as weather and its various phenomena are a regular feature of Nature (prakriti) and the universe. No use denying one and accepting the other.

Seeker! Just as Matter, Man and God are the facts of life, similarly Maya and Pralaya are its inevitable phenomena- so long as life is what it is. Ignore them at your peril. But what to do?

Live Godlike. Surrender your will unto that of the Lord. Be humble. Lightning strikes the highest building. Pralaya strikes a vain and conceited person. Humility reduces the chance of causing untoward imbalances*.

When a violent storm is born and it rages wild-it strikes all. In a catastrophe more or less everybody suffers. Seemingly, an innocent person suffers as well, but, in truth, he is not innocent. He, too, is guilty and is to blame for not doing something to correct the imbalances. In this respect, he is as bad as a bad man is. It is not sufficient to act right individually. It is equally essential to fight for a good cause so that others also act right. To run the affairs of the world is a human responsibility-a joint venture.

The state of imbalance may be caused by Mr. A or Mr. B, but it affects us all. If a neighbour sets fire to my house that does not mean that I will suffer and not he, nor others. Fire can spread and burn down their houses as well.

As already said, an imbalance is a hazard and Pralaya does strike to correct it. It is imperative that It should. That's the Law of Nature. No man ever suffers alone. They also suffer who are a part of that man's 'environment'.

Environment? It is what environs you. You are not just what your physical geography is. The 'area' that your subtle body occupies is much larger. In a way that is what your environment is. You and I are travelling by a train and sitting side by side. Physically we are a few inches apart but in terms of the 'environment' we may be miles apart. A saint can influence one particular person more than the other. In

• Humility's function is the same that of a lightning arrester for protecting tall buildings against thunderbolt.

one case he succeeds, in the second case he does not. The question is that of proximity. Why should a prophet be respected by one and ignored by others? The question is that of the prophet's 'environment' being nearer to a particular person than that of the other. Why talk of a prophet? You, too, feel interested in one person and are indifferent to another.

To continue: What was I talking about? Pralaya strikes to correct an imbalance whether Mr. A creates it or Mr. B does it. Long ago, man realized it and began to think in terms of collective responsibility to keep up the equilibrium-poise and peace. From this realization was born the idea of having a government that should govern the life of an individual as effectively as possible. (It is quite a different thing that people began to

rule instead of governing man's conduct only. The idea was to regulate an individual's behaviour in such a manner as to keep down the incidence of imbalances.)

The world government is a hypothetical question at present. But it is a possibility, probability even. Could man living as a member of a tribe ever imagine that he would live as a member of a nation wherein thousands of tribes shall find their emotional integration-even fulfilment.

Let the time come when an isolated action of one single individual, living in some remote corner of the world, shall affect humanity as a whole. Necessity will then compel humankind to strive for a world government.

In the success of a human way of life lies the emancipation of man. He cannot go back to the ancient tribal way of life. That system has outlived its utility. (At one time, tribal way of life was an improvement upon an irresponsible individual living.) Humanity shall progress ever and anon-it's the human imperative.

Man is already being forced to come out of his shell. He is slowly but steadily realizing that he is not an isolated existence but an integral part of the environment. An inordinate imbalance occuring therein affects him as well. Whether it is a physical, psychic or spiritual imbalance- whether it is some other complex disequilibrium sparked by the environmental imbalances-man is adversely affected.

He starts limping through life. Whenever this happens he and his environments are in for a Pralaya's inevitable thrust-to restore the necessary balance.

Pralaya's thrusts-one after another-are irksome. Sometimes they threaten man's existence even. Danger quickens man's mind and he begins to ponder. He has had enough of shocks and is already thinking in terms of a multi- dimensional larger man. He is ever extending, in the process, the frontiers of his mind and intellect. He has secured the release of religion from its narrow precincts. He does not hesitate to demolish whatever tries to hem it in. Frantic efforts are being made in quest of new values- though he himself knows not what they will be. At times, this search alarms the minds of the people around and there are protests. But there is nothing to be alarmed about. It is a healthy sign. Man is becoming a better human being-in terms of religious aesthetics.

Whether it is brotherhood of man that religion preaches, whether it is the realization of life being one integrated whole and there being no isolation-it is a call of the human

element of life for an eternal equipoise-Godhead! In God alone the forces of integration (Deva) and disintegration (असुर) stay balanced. In God alone the dynamics of Pralaya finds its fulfilment.

As things are: Unless man becomes one integrated whole (पूर्ण, Purna), he will always be in for one revolution (Pralaya's thrust) or another. Not only he would be affected but his environment also. The dynamics of Pralaya is ever on the move to correct the imbalance wherever it occurs.

Let man not despair. Let him build Noah's arks-the areas of safety-where there will be equilibrium, peace and poise. Noah's ark is the same as an emergence of a prophet or a master. There are Masters already here, and they do play a constructive role in human affairs. Believe it or not-but it is true.

Everybody has in him or her the making of a master. He or she should transcend Maya and aspire to humanize Pralaya too-to become a Master-a Siddha Purusha. God is great!! OM!

10. REVOLUTION: PRALAYA'S THRUST

OM! Revolution? Once it gets going can anybody contain it? Rather difficult to determine its extent. Even persons directly involved fail to understand the wherefore of it There is much more to it than meets the eye. Let us see;

People misbehave. They do many wrongs and commit social crimes. Their actions are inhuman, immoral and ungodly. As this state of affairs goes on, a strange furor begins to rage in the hearts of men of good faith-with repercussions all over*.

Because of it all, a state of disequilibrium is created and a crisis develops-in that part of the universe where this unseemly atmosphere prevails.

The crisis deepens and the state of imbalances approaches the danger point. Faith in the law of moral justice gets a rough jolt. The people protest and ready themselves for a violent struggle. They even blame God for the wrongs done by the unscrupulous, although they are their own kith and kin.

At a gallop the imbalances mount up. They mount up to the chagrin of MAN in the hearts of men of goodwill, MAN becomes angry. Moved by the violence of the angry young man, the dynamics of Pralaya** sets about ...

Man is in a bad shape; his heart bleeds. Misgivings begin to assail the mind and his faith in divine justice gets a rude shock. Lest he should be lost beyond redemption--a sudden descent of force, a breakthrough at long last and the dynamics of Pralaya gathers momentum to unleash its forces. Lo, the revolution is afoot. In full blast the people

• Life is one integrated whole and there can be no isolation.

According to Kurma Puraana, Pralaya has four dimensions. They are:

(i) Nitya (नित्य): That which is an everyday affair.

(ii) Naimittaka (नैमित्तक): When Brahma, the creative principle of life, is no more active.

(iii) Praakrita (प्राकृत): When Mahat-tattva (HR) and other tattvas (elements) dissolve themselves into the Ultimate.

(iv) Aatyintaka (आत्यिन्ताका): That occurs when somebody attains Moksha. Normally man is affected by the first dimension of Pralaya-i.e., Nitya (नित्य).

strike right and left, till the imbalances are set right and a state of equilibrium restored.

Why a revolution at all? Why the vehemence of violence and its ruthlessness? Why couldn't the Benevolent One change human hearts in time?

The revolution is a Pralaya's dynamic thrust to correct the inordinate imbalances and restore a welcome poise and equilibrium. Still-why should the Pralaya strike at all?

Hark! It sounds like Pralaya saying: "It is God's wish that neither life nor man shall perish. Given the choice you will also do what the Lord does. No price is too high to pay in order to save the world of man from utter annihilation."

A revolution brought about by Pralaya is the essence of human progress-and it is then that God graces the occasion with His presence. OM!

To my mind Pralaya is the cutting edge of God's wrath and the essence of His mercy and grace.

11. AGAIN HERE I AM

OM! Here I am:

Dear Seeker! You heard me, heard about love, faith and the spirit-both human and divine. Now that whatever sought expression has found it, I feel like a path along which passed-some while ago-a cavalcade.

As the moving cavalcade trotted along-springing surprises on me ever and anon-I felt thrilled, trilled, mystified-heart throbbing with dull pain. Though strangely sad, I felt as well awesomely glad. All is not just word-play-I did not play upon the words alone. It's a word- picture of what I then thought or felt.

Here, I do wish you well. May God bless your query and quest. I will be glad to see you moved ever so little. Man endeavouring to arouse himself is a marvel. Man showing signs of waking up thrills-he exalts.

You are man, a human being. Live your life with human dignity. Why bother about a miracle to augment your resolve? Aren't you yourself a miracle of the creation? "To measure you by your smallest deed is to reckon the power of the ocean by the frailty of its foam. And to judge you by your failures is to cast blame upon seasons for their inconstancy." Know thyself to know thy power. Human potential is unbounded ever. TAT TVAM ASI (तत् त्वाम् असि)-THAT THOU ART-yours is a destiny divine.

TAT TVAM ASI? Who said Vedanta? To my mind, Vedanta is a higher human value. It is a way of life, belief and behaviour in which the veda (a higher human aspiration and an earnest prayer) finds its anta (fulfilment). That is to say, in the Vedanta Way of Life prayers and human aspirations find their fulfilment. Neither speculation nor philosophy-please live the Vedanta Way to know the whereof of it.*

Aspirant! You are unique. Your way of life and the faith are also unique. Live them in all sincerity. That is the only way to prove yourself. And that way alone you can realize that you are no longer an animal sort. Find your faith to find your God and all that is worth aspiring for. For He is! The question is only that of self-fulfilment-call it Self-realization if you may.

What is my way of life? I am not different. I am as you are-I also live on hopes and am often given to vacillations. Off and on, I, too, find myself desolate even in the midst of friends. But I prefer to leave my problem in His hands and forget about it. Once I think the Lord said: "Either do it yourself or let Me do it. Your brooding only distracts.

Enough about myself, now let me go on:

Living entirely for one's own self, living on others and living off others is unhuman, unwholesome. It lets loose the brute in man and makes him callous, uncaring. He feels only when himself hurt. Other people's sufferings touch him not.

I know, to live the Vedanta way is possible only when man is spiritually aroused. Earlier it is a mere academic discussion or at best a human belief.

Aspirant! A spurt of violence here, a burst of turmoil there and a rash stampede elsewhere-pose a tough problem. It is a human problem all the same.

A human problem should be solved on the human level. Just appealing to man's good sense won't do. Only a strong sense of fulfilment can save the situation.

Do initiate, create and develop a wholesome way of life. Too many moral ills of the world are due to the suppression of the good in us.

First things first-God must come first. Words break no bones. Glittering phraseology do not make life look brighter. What matters is what you do and how you do it. Cherish, care and relish what you do. No morbid thinking, no running away, no sickly attitude. Fall in love with life. Love every moment of it, before it departs once and for all. A wholesome approach like that would augur well for the future of humankind. OM!

12. LAST WORD

OM! Lest I should forget, I owe it all to Bawaji, my Guru. He seldom preached as preaching goes; still he made me aware of the higher truths of life as never before. It was he who jerked me out of the monotonous and the usual and gave a new direction to my life. Great of him indeed.

I remember, one dark night:

Eyes closed, struggling hard with the vagaries of the mind-I wanted to sweep them under the carpet and meditate. Of a sudden Bawaji spelled out!

What the words were is of not much consequence, but they did ring a dark curtain up. Strangely glad of heart, I saw heavenly light in the middle of the night. It was the Kindly Light.

How long the vision lasted, hard to recall. But I did hear a startling voice spell out in so many words: "Man, step aside so that I can step in."

Ever since, that has been the keystone of my way of life and thinking. Time and time again I remind myself of that and pray in the words of a friend:

"My heart is vibrant with a sweet emotion,

Eager to pour out the meaning of life,

Infused in me by that look divine

Which Thou hast in grace, compassion, mercy

Forever vouchsafed to me.

OM! OM! OM!

13. A WORD BEFORE WE PART

OM! From time immemorial, man has worked hard to alleviate human suffering and make life worth living. This struggle has been going on in the human hearts, and on a wider front-the humanity itself.

Man wants to be at peace with himself, his neighbour, and with the whole world. He wants to bring in an era of world of peace, harmony and justice-For, conflict, tension and tyranny are eating into his vitals. Not that he shirks responsibility, he in fact strives unabated to establish higher standards of courage, faith and honour.

Man has already laid down certain broad principles of life. There is no absolute mandate as such, but they have stood the test of time and experience. While determining human values-man kept in view the legitimate demands of the occasion and made them conform to the highly cherished ideals.

Keeping in mind the environment and the prevailing conditions of life, it can be said that whatever man does is mundane, is Science, is Asura (असुर). The higher human aspirations that man aspires after is other-worldly, is Spirituality, is Sura (सुर, Deva).

As things are--the Science and Spirituality (the scientific temper* and the spiritual temper) vie with each other for

Name them as the Asura vritti and the Sura vritti-if you like.

ascendancy over the human spirit. For, whatever controls the human spirit also controls man-his life, his destiny. Whether good or bad, but it is so.

Placed as man is, he can neither easily transcend the basics (actualities) of life nor comfortably ignore the call of the higher human aspirations. Under these circumstances a clash between Asuras (Science) and the Suras (Spirituality*) is inevitable.

Any comfort for the thus placed man? He is groaning under the stress and strain of this unwholesome harassment and tension. Any remedy? Vision, faith, grace, beliefs, even traditions might sometimes help, but he is not sure of their effectiveness.

The scientific approach-experimentation, observation, analysis and inference-has its own advantages. It does give relief to the suffering humanity in many ways. However, at times, it creates more problems than it can solve. These problems disturb, distress, even agonise. Man is bewildered, feels uneasy. The unquiet inside cries its heart out. That is how the Suras (Devas) felt whenever the Asuras battered them relentlessly.

According to the legend of Samudra Manthana, the Suras approached the Lord and related their tale of woe. "Pray, help," they pleaded.

The Lord of the Universe smiled and kept His own counsel. Disconcerted, the Suras were about to break down when the Wise One benevolently spelt out: "Peace is no boon that can be granted at will. You can have it only if your opponents-the Asuras-cooperate.'

With one voice they almost yelled: "Seek the cooperation of our foes? Impossible, we won't....."

"The choice is yours. Cooperate or perish. Unless the Asuras join hands with you to churn the ocean, you cannot get what will help you to survive," said the Wise One.

*To my mind, the lack of coordination between the two vital aspects of life can safely be called the so-called devil.

At long last the Suras and the Asuras got together to churn the ocean. The Mandara mountain was the churning rod. For the churning cord they got hold of Vasuka-the Serpent King. The Lord Himself incarnated as Kurma Avatara to be the pivot for the churning rod. They churned and churned on till they got what helped Suras to survive and triumph.

Today, as never before, the crying need of the hour is the coordination and active cooperation of Science and Spirituality to save the world from annihilation.

The above related episode from the Hindu Mythology clearly indicates exactly what I have tried to say: "Let the science and spirituality join hands to save the universe, man and God." OM!

OM! OM! OM

NEW DIMENSIONS OF YOGA

SOME OF THE PRESS REVIEWS

Yogi Raushan Nath, with the authority of his personal experience, underlines in this book vividly and convincingly that Yoga is a dimension of life and that it bridges the gulf between man and Divinity. The Yogi says, by co-ordinating and harmonising the various aspects of life, Yoga brings a rule of law in the realms of thought and action of man and makes him walk out of the narrow confines of selfish pursuits and aspire for Higher Values.....The easy and intimate style and the subjective touch to the analysis and explanations, will undoubtedly make the reader realise the new dimensions of Yoga, propounded by Yogi Raushan Nath.

Free Press Journal, Bombay

This fascinating book, which makes the religious way natural and easy to follow, deals with all aspects of life, even the essential part which evil may have to play. Chapter 59 by itself makes this work outstanding. Chapter 68 is so transparently honest and credible a description of the separation of the astral body from the physical, that I, for one, cannot, doubt its authenticity or ignore its significance.....Yogi Raushan Nath has the passionate intensity of the highest type of loving *guru*, and the truly scientific observation and control to make his love effective. He has revived my longing to return to India, for I should dearly like to meet this remarkable man.

The Aryan Path, Bombay

The book offers Yoga as a universal discipline. Yoga is most natural to man, as natural as life itself. Indeed, it invests life with a new meaning, giving a new direction to the whole course of one's life. "Yoga reveals new dimensions of the mind, the intellect and the self." It does not add anything from without, or create anything new. Yoga sets in motion an inward process of transformation.....The closing sections of the book contain a brief account of the life and work of the author's Master, his Guru. The narrative is absorbing, with deep interest sustained throughout. Books of this kind are bound to have an elevating influence on those that read them.

The Hindu, Madras

This book is really very simple and delightful to read. It's a book on karma yoga—a practical guide to the conduct of life with spirituality in view.....it abounds in practical advice for a healthy worldly life which is conducive to spiritual progress. It is eminently suited to the needs of modern educated men.

The Tribune, Ambala

The author of this instructive book approaches *yoga* as Nature's characteristic way of life and not as something unusual, mysterious which takes one away from life. A happy addition to current spiritual literature.

Bhavan's Journal, Bombay

This is an oh-so-great book on yoga.....Indeed there is no trace of the negativist approach in Raushan Nath's philosophy. He doesn't look down upon the joys of life or ordinary human relationships.....An altogether elevating book with passages of arresting beauty.

The Patriot, New Delhi